THE PLAYSTATION 3 MAGAZINE

PSM3

April 2008
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PlayStation 3 | P

REVIEWS!

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Army Of Two | Lost |
Harvey Birdman |
Condemned 2
MORE!

PLUS!

MGS ONLINE

Better than Call of Duty 4? First playtest

FIRST-REVIEW!

Dark Sector

How an unknown Resident Evil clone proves 2008 is the year of PS3

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PlayStation 2

Make it big in Hollywood

"...And I want to thank my mother for letting me stay up late and watch my favourite Hollywood movies as a kid, so I could recognise the clips. And my fellow contestants, all 7 of you, for playing the game with me. Thank you my living room, the place where it all happened. My cat for spiritual strength. And finally Brad and Leonardo and Johnny, I wouldn't have been able to answer the 5000 questions without you."

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PSM3 Start

"Another surprise might finish us off"

"First, an apology. One for making a book you can actually use, as opposed to flogging disc files and magazine *pages* as separate gifts. And two, to you – because in the course of the book we, er, tell you how to play *Lair* on PSP at least twice. It's the only oversight in what, we hope, is an actually useful guide to getting the most from your PS3 – including how to 'lend' TV off the internet and watch it in HD. More surprising yet, is the relatively unknown *Dark Sector* – PS3's best-looking game since *Call Of Duty 4*, and proof its early development woes are over. Final surprise? We'd recommend you tune back for issue 100 next month. We can't say any more, but our lead game – and *who* it involves – couldn't be more perfect..."

Daniel Dawkins Editor
psm3@futurenet.co.uk

In the making of this issue of PSM3...
36 mind-boggling minigames.
2,527 hurls of a glaive.
One issue away from the century.

The PSM3 Promise

The sharpest opinions
Every bit of the magazine is dedicated to giving you more information. If we're worried that a feature in a game isn't working, we'll not only tell you about it, but we'll have a word with the developer too.

The biggest games
Fact is, if a game makes it into the pages of PSM3 then it's something worth knowing about. PSM3 says no to lazy page fillers and boring 'me too' games.

The richest detail
We finish every game we review. Our secrets are the result of us playing the game and finding them ourselves. We've got what you want to know and tell you how you want to hear it.

The most committed videogame mag team
The PSM3 team live and breathe PlayStation. There's no game we haven't played and there's no end to our quest for knowledge and gaming greatness.

The best DVD action
We've got the best DVD in the business. We cram it with the best PS3, PS2 and PSP games each and every month. For free.

Three to read first...

"Feels rather like an expansion pack for *Resident Evil 4*"

How **Dark Sector** is a touch too over-familiar – page 18

"Just some of the maddest minigames"

Minigames are taking over – page 50

"Beat tramps to death with a prosthetic leg in a crack house"

Why **Condemned 2** is PS3's bleakest game ever – page 64

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The PlayStation 3 Magazine

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"One of the best-looking games on PS3"

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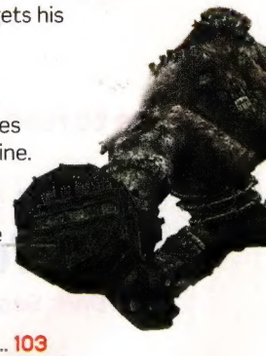

"Has some great ideas... but ruins them"

With depressing predictability, **Blacksite: Area 51** isn't really up to much – page 70

Photoplay Lost page 78

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15
FEATURING Dark Sector | Prototype | LittleBigPlanet | Soul Calibur IV | Rainbow Six Vegas 2
Sega Superstars Tennis | God Of War: Chains Of Olympus | Condemned 2 | Yakuza 3 | More

SIDE 2: HOW TO

Copy your HD files onto your PS3

Step one
You need to download the hi-def movies onto your hard drive to view them properly. Insert Side B of the disc into your PS3, then click across to Video on the cross-media bar. Select the disc and press △. Choose Display All from the menu, and highlight the trailers you want to Copy and download.

Step two
The trailers will download to your hard drive in a few minutes or less. When they're done, they'll appear as rolling video thumbnails – click ⊗ to play your chosen HD movie. Enjoy.

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Respect the Environment

Throwing away old or surplus discs?
If you would like your CDs and DVDs to be recycled rather than put into landfill, please post them to: Polymer-Reprocessors, Reeds Lane, Moreton, Wirral, CH46 1DW
Please respect the environment and dispose of waste plastic responsibly.

PS3, PS2 & PSP footage

SIDE A: DVD FOOTAGE All-new footage of all the biggest PS3 games, including *Highlander*, *Condemned 2*, *Sega Superstars Tennis* and loads of others – and listen out for our no-holds-barred audio reviews as well.

Dark Sector
See D3's stunning *Resi 4* tribute in action now, and then head over to the exclusive review on page 18.

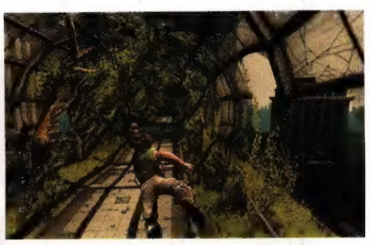
PS3 Game Themes
This month, the themes are on Side A – see our full guide on how to get them on page 103.

+ LittleBigPlanet | **Armored Core: For Answer** | Jumper | **Highlander** | More

PS3 HD video files

SIDE B: PS3 HD FILES Want to see games in true Hi-Definition? Our HD files – which need to be downloaded to your hard drive (see above) – include *Soul Calibur IV*, *NBA Ballers: Chosen One* and loads more. Don't miss out.

Rainbow Six Vegas 2
The Rainbow Six team are back in Vegas. Again. Check out Ubisoft's terrorism-busting sequel in hi-def.



Bionic Commando
Now with the *Rearmed* suffix, we'll be interested to see how this remake progresses. See it in hi-def.

+ Far Cry 2 | **Turning Point** | Yakuza 3 | **Monster Madness Extreme** | More

Lost Odyssey
1000 years of memories lost. It's time to discover them.
From the famed creator of Final Fantasy, Hironobu Sakaguchi, comes a revolutionary RPG experience rich in depth, emotion and cinematic gameplay. In an age that has harnessed the dark power of magic, you are the mysterious, immortal Kaim – on a quest to reclaim 1,000 years of lost memories. Unlock a past infused with love, betrayal, and war to reveal the path to reclaim your life and rescue the world.
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Hard news, all PlayStation action

PS3 REPORT

Game Developers Conference 2008

Sony adopt low profile, but wii-axis, PSP store and PS3 gossip dominate

The annual Game Developer's Conference held in San Francisco in February, is often a rich source of game announcements – Phil Harrison unveiled *Home* and *LittleBigPlanet* at last year's event, while giving us a sneak peek of *Killzone 2* – but this year's show was notable for EA's excellent *Mirror's Edge*, Naughty Dog spilling *Uncharted's* tech-secrets and some tantalising rumours.

Q-Games, the quirky Kyoto-based outfit made up of almost entirely of Brits, talked briefly about its *Pixeljunk* series and the challenges the developers have faced working with collaborator Sony. "It's been difficult to get Sony to approve the graphical style we are using with *PixelJunk* as they want as us to have trendier graphics – but we are sticking with our unique style for the next two *PixelJunk* games," said Q's founder Dylan Cuthbert.

So Q is not stopping after *Racers* and *Monsters*. Next up is *PixelJunk Eden*, a supremely colourful romp where the player controls a blob that pollinates flowers. Cuthbert also hinted at the fourth game in the franchise, which he suggested was a 2D dungeon crawler with a twist.

Talk, talk, talk

Every PS3-related lecture at GDC was packed to the rafters. There were six on *Uncharted* alone, in which Naughty Dog explained the methods used to create their game, stressing that the challenge for PS3 developers is not about getting to grips with the machine, but how to take best advantage of its strengths – such as the hard drive and Blu-ray. Naughty Dog's co-president Christophe Balestra said that the hard drive is a blessing no game should leave unused. All the textures in *Uncharted* were streamed from the hard drive and, according to Balestra, it only took three days to implement the code for this.

Giving it all away

Already known as one of the nicest developers on the planet – and also judged one of the top places to work in the US year after year – Insomniac is giving other PS3 developers free access to most of the technology it used for *Resistance* and *Ratchet & Clank: ToD*. We urge you to check out their recruitment video on YouTube – it's at tinyurl.com/ywwkzx.

Many games were demoed outside the conference halls. The latest build of *Prototype* impressed with its crowded depiction of the streets of New York, while Capcom kept court at nearby hotel, where we got to grips with *Street Fighter IV* – complete with several new playable stages and two new characters Abel and C. Viper. We also saw the latest build of *Bionic Commando*. "I'm definitely not thinking that old school gamers can't wait for the game," said producer Ben Judd. "I'm not kidding myself that *Bionic Commando* is well known among gamers, which is all the more reason we have to make this game the best it can be." This should turn out be far better than *Lost Planet* – the grappling mechanic already works brilliantly.

ON THE DISC
See the latest hi-def game trailers on the disc
Side B

"PS3 was a very big part of this year's GDC"

Eye, eye This is an Eye tech demo – draw a shape, hold it to the Eye and it appears on-screen as a tank.

However, by far the most impressive thing we witnessed at GDC was Digital Illusion's *Mirror's Edge*. It's a first-person action game, seen through the eyes of a lady called Faith. The visceral feel and physicality of the game – as Faith runs up a staircase, slams her body onto a door, running onto a sunlit roof, sprinting towards the edge of a skyscraper, leaping onto a crane and running down its supporting structure and somersaulting onto the adjacent rooftop – left us wondering why we've yet to really see something like *Mirror's Edge*. The city environment is mostly white with distinct red areas – Faith's 'runner vision' that shows potential routes through the levels – is stunning.

And that's a *quiet* show. We can't wait to see what E3 brings in July.

Pub Various | **Dev** Various | **ETA** TBC

Gossip Five hottest rumours of GDC 2008

You hear all sorts of things just wandering around the corridors of GDC...

More *Tools Of Destruction*

One of the more believable rumours circulating along the corridors of GDC was that we'll get more *Ratchet: Tools Of Destruction* at the end of the year. While this is a given considering the game's popularity, it's the method of delivery that intrigues us – it'll be a Network download. We'll see what it offers.

Remote control

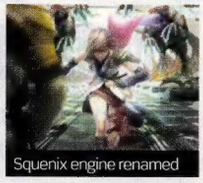
The wildest rumour PSM3 heard around the hallways at the Games Developers Conference was about a new controller compatible with both PS3 and PS2 – specifically a Wii-like motion sensing controller that would offer control possibilities akin to Nintendo's console. True? *Possibly* – but we'll see.

Buy stuff using PSP

Sony America rep Chris Eden has confirmed that PSP is getting its own PlayStation Store, similar to what is available for PS3 gamers. At the moment, you can only buy and download demos, videos and suchlike to your PSP via a computer, but the new Store will change this by the end of the year.

Indiana Jones still exists

Peter Hirschmann, LucasArts VP of development, confirmed to PSM3 that the Indy Jones game we haven't seen since E3 2006, is in active development. Expect production to ramp up after Lucasarts ships *The Force Unleashed* in June. They're also shifting to PS3 as its lead development platform.



Squenix engine renamed

Square Enix has renamed its new powerful cross-platform games engine from White Engine to Crystal Tools. This is what powers the upcoming *Final Fantasy XIII* games (FFXIII and *Versus XIII*). Sadly, nothing was shown running on the engine at the 'Technology Of *Final Fantasy*' presentation.

ON THE DISC
You'll see all these games on future discs
PS3/Coming Soon

The Opinionator

"Making another FPS? Don't bother..."

...at least not until you can reach the level of – or even surpass – *Half-Life* and *Call Of Duty*. We're sick of sub-standard first-person shooters like *Turok*, *TimeShift*, *FEAR* and *Jericho*. While some are decent enough in their own right, we're never able to shake the feeling – and even we're sick of repeating it – that, "Well, it's no *CoD4*."

In control

Before a developer even thinks about releasing an FPS, they need to spend a lot of time on their aiming system and controls. Because if a game feels sloppy and unresponsive the moment we fire it up, we'll already be down on it. We'll already be thinking about *Call Of Duty* and how slick it is, or *Half-Life*'s set pieces and sublime pacing. Why bother churning out half-arsed imitators? Oh, that's right – because FPSs make money.

We're not saying developers shouldn't *try* to compete with the big guns, but they should at least have the foresight to know what unique ground they're competing on. Teams may be smaller and budgets may be tighter, but the bare-bones of an FPS are dictated by programming talent, not financial weight. Even on a pittance, Infinity Ward would have made a 'tight' FPS – just one without the production values of *CoD4*.

B-movies

So leave it with the *Conflicts* and bin the *Jerichos*. It's like a movie studio releasing an epic Ridley Scott depiction of WW1, then Shatola Studios releasing their version at the same time, where the props are all cardboard and the actors have pop guns. There are so many first-person shooters to learn from in every corner of gaming history – *Quake*, *Unreal*, *Far Cry*... getting it wrong is no excuse with so many good examples to learn from. **Andy Kelly**

Myth-Buster

SEEN THIS? Sony's won the format war. Hmm...

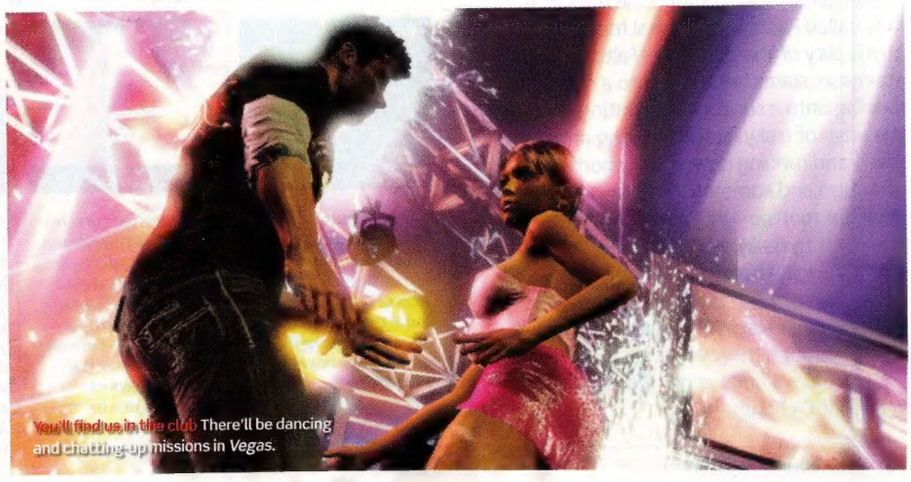
THE TRUTH Consider, for a moment, World War One. Superficially, we – Britain – beat Germany, but really the victor was the USA, hovering above and ready to snatch up the spoils. It's the same with Blu-Ray and HD-DVD – we applauded when Blockbuster fell to our side, gasped when Warner Bros allied themselves, cheered when we finally won – but there's a larger threat, ready to render the war futile. Digital downloads might be a distant rumble – partly because they've characteristically needed a PC or Mac to use – but with Apple, Microsoft and Netflix all pioneering technology that'll make it easier to download content to your TV, it's gathering momentum. iTunes already shows that consumers are moving away from plastic boxes. Your precious Blu-Ray collection could be obsolete within years.

1 This Is Vegas

Place your bets now...

GTA Vegas? Kind of, certainly, in a game in which you're tasked to save the Bright Light City from being turned into a family-friendly holiday resort. Obviously. Aside from the gunplay, though (based on the *Stranglehold* engine), expect gambling – and lots of it – and mission objectives which require you to dance like a demon, chat-up girls, play barman, be a male stripper (really) and loads more besides. The hotels have had their names changed, so Circus Circus, say, becomes Big Top – but aside from that, it's recognisably Vegas. Let's hope the gameplay is as vibrant as the city itself.

Pub Midway | **Dev** Surreal | **ETA** September


You'll find us in the club There'll be dancing and chatting-up missions in *Vegas*.

"'Every aspect has been vastly improved'"
Grand Theft Auto IV page 13

Every casino game should be replicated in *This Is Vegas*.

"Gamble, chat-up girls, dance, be a male stripper..."

2 Aliens: Colonial Marines

Classic movie series is reborn

No, Sigourney Weaver isn't in it. Instead, you take control of an army of US marines and go after a horde of evil aliens. We're promised "classic Aliens weaponry" and levels set on board the Sulaco spaceship of the movies, as well as a clutch of other environments. It's a tactical squad shooter, made by Gearbox – of *Brothers In Arms* fame. The script, meanwhile, is by Bradley Thompson and David Weddle, who worked on Deep Space Nine and Battlestar Galactica. It all sounds very promising...

Pub Sega | **Dev** Gearbox | **ETA** Winter

3 Red Faction: Guerilla

FPS series goes open-world

The two *Red Factions* on PS2 were decent near-future FPSs, famed mainly for allowing you to blast big chunks out of the scenery. Now it's moved into the third-person and Volition are attempting to make a non-linear, open-world shooter in which you can pick your objectives in any order. Expect even more destruction than last time, including buildings which collapse entirely.

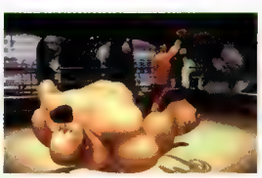
Pub THQ | **Dev** Volition | **ETA** Early 2009

4 Facebreaker

A boxing game, obviously

Those who have been hoping for a new *Fight Night* game might be surprised. EA Canada, the developers behind the undisputed champion of boxing games, have returned to the ring with a a game that, visually, looks more like *Ready To Rumble* than anything else. There'll be full-on facial deformation, and 'comedy' characters. You'll also be able to take a snap of your face with the Eye, paste it into the game, then watch it get punched into paste by your opponent. Impressive.

Pub EA | **Dev** EA Canada | **ETA** Winter



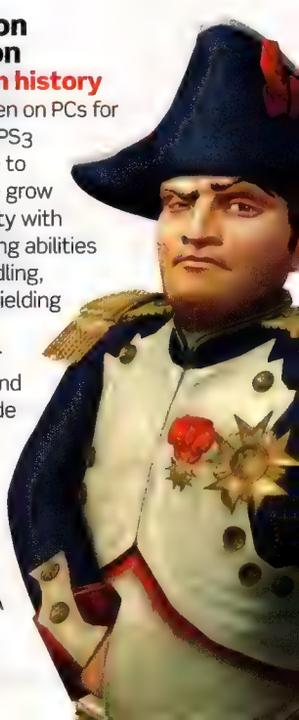
Facebreaker and *Civ* We're hoping for good things from '*Breaker*. We're *certain* of them from *Civilization*.

5 Civilization Revolution

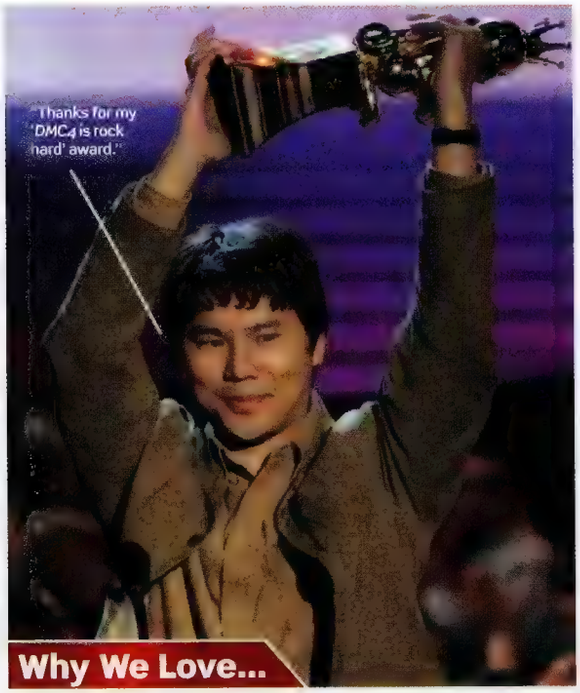
Write your own history

Civilization has been on PCs for years. But now to PS3 comes the chance to watch your people grow from a basic society with no reading or writing abilities into a globe-straddling, nuclear-weapon wielding superpower. *Civ* games can last for weeks at a time, and with an online mode featuring head-to-head and team matches, you might need a few months off work to play it.

Pub 2K | **Dev** Firaxis | **ETA**



ON THE DISC
SFIV is on this month's disc



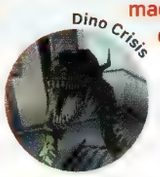
Why We Love...

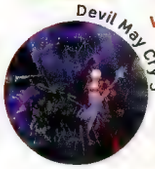
Hiroyuki Kobayashi

One of Capcom's most respected producers

What has he done?

Kobayashi-san has worked on every major Capcom game since *Resident Evil* on PSone. He's held almost every position imaginable, including producer, designer and director. He worked closely with Suda 51 on *Killer7*, and was in charge of the excellent PS2 port of *Resi 4*. He also worked on *Dino Crisis* and the *DMC* series too.





Why we like him?

Because he's one of the most confident developers in the business. We've interviewed him twice and he's very outspoken, reacting to negative comments with blasé self-assuredness. He's also incredibly respected in Japan - we visited him at Capcom's Osaka HQ and he was fawned over by the staff there. Oh, and he made a disparaging comment about Andy's fashion sense at dinner that evening. And rightly so.

What's he doing now?

Having just finished on *DMC4*, Kobayashi-san was supposed to be working on *Resi 5*, but was replaced by *Lost Planet* producer Keiji Inafune. We're not sure what he's working on next - perhaps *Devil May Cry 5*? We'll know soon.

Who are you?
Name Hiroyuki Kobayashi
Role Producer
Key Games *Dino Crisis, Resident Evil, Devil May Cry*

The Insider

He's the man who knows too much...

EA's **FIFA** series is evolving, with new Producer David Rutter – who's previously worked on Eidos' **Championship Manager** series and Silicon Dreams' **Urban Freestyle Soccer** – replacing Joe Booth at the helm. During our recent meeting, David was keen to eliminate the 'stickiness' when defenders bring down a high ball in **FIFA 08**, often leading to cheap goals as the striker barges in. Looking further ahead, it's rumoured the series' will work harder to differentiate teams' playing styles. EA are sticking with the core gameplay engine – for now – but it'll evolve each year in the same way as **PES**.

Internet rumours persist about PS3's **In-game XMB** (Cross Media Bar) firmware update, allowing you to chat with other gamers without returning to the main menu.

"A new *Onimusha* isn't on the radar for at least a year"

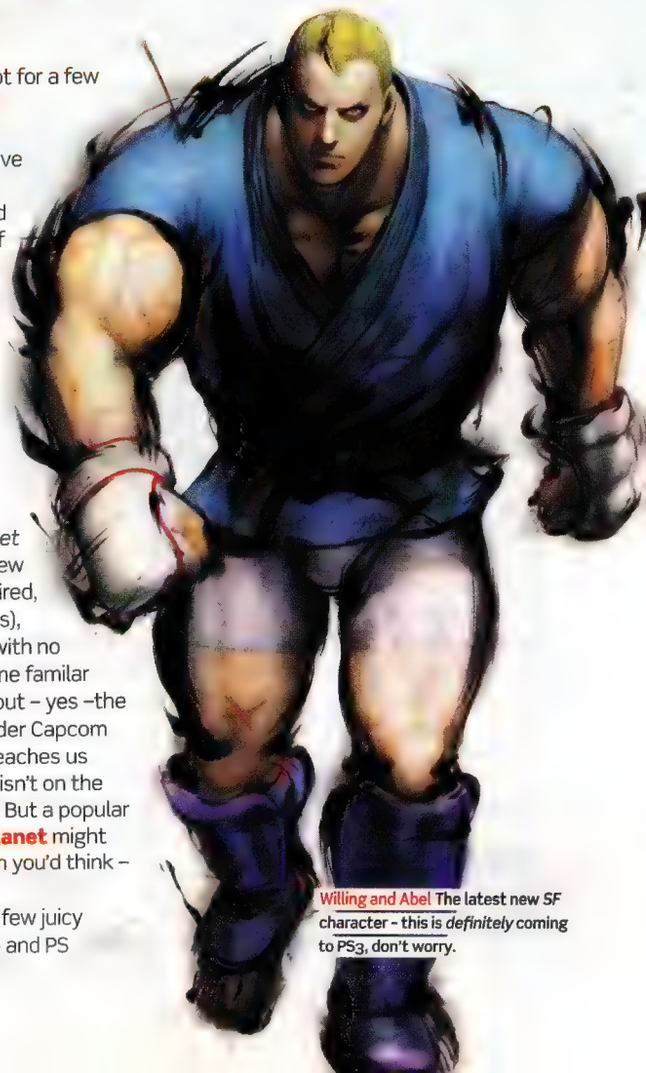
Our prediction? It'll happen, but not for a few months – and expect a big **Home** announcement, with 'trophies' or achievements, to rival the Xbox Live system, as rumoured on the net.

Sister tech mag T3 is convinced Sony will release a 'slim' version of PS3 – like with PS2 – mocking up a prototype on a recent cover. Our guess? It'll happen, with an associated price drop – but not until winter at the earliest, if not next year. The 'slim' PS2 didn't launch until the fourth year of the console's life (2004), so reports may be premature.

Capcom's **Street Fighter 4** might not be confirmed for PS3 *yet* – but it's only a matter of time. New characters Crimson Viper (red-haired, suit sporting female in sunglasses), and Abel (a muscle-bound "man with no past"), are set to be joined by some familar bosses. We're sworn to secrecy, but – yes –the one you'd expect will return. Sadder Capcom news for **Onimusha** fans. Word reaches us that a potential next-gen sequel isn't on the radar for *at least* a year – if at all. But a popular Xbox 360 game that *isn't* **Lost Planet** might be receiving a sequel sooner than you'd think – and making its PS3 debut.

Sony's 2008 line-up contains a few juicy surprises – more on the firmware and PS Network side than games, mind. Almost all the AAA titles you know about – this year's big push is on **Killzone 2**, **Resistance 2** and **MotorStorm 2** (set on a pacific isle, with incredible jungle tracks and active volcanos, plus great real-time water effects). Sony, however, recently demoed a 'secret' title, due 2009, that could "be on the brink of a step change in what games consoles are capable of in terms of story-telling and immersion," claims the BBC technology website. What do we know? Err... nothing, of course ;-)

Strategy fans will be glad to learn that Sierra/Vivendi are bringing top PC series **World In Conflict** to PS3 – with voice-support to rival **Tom Clancy's Endwar**. Ubisoft are also on the verge of some big announcements, due to coincide with the Ubi Days event in Paris in May. Our tips: **Alive**, **Assassin's 2** and a PS3 **Prince Of Persia** – plus some new IPs.



Willing and Abel The latest new *SF* character - this is *definitely* coming to PS3, don't worry.

"WWE games look like two robots going at it"
TNA Impact page 14

PS3 REPORT

"We've lived this game for 10 years"

Rockstar boss Dan Houser talks exclusively to PSM3 about *GTAIV*...

Why did the team decide to tell the story of Niko Bellic, an immigrant in New York?

For us, it's always about creating a lead character that you can feel connected to. One that feels like they belong in the world, but are new to it in some way, so they discover it with you. We have always thought it important for people playing the game to be able to go through the process of arriving in an unknown city, and gradually get familiar with it as the game goes on. Arriving as an outsider to Liberty City also allows a lot more opportunities to take a sideways look at modern life here, really adding to the satire. For *GTAIV* we wanted to tell an immigrant's story, and Niko seemed like a perfect fit.

What improvements over *GTA: SA* are you proudest of? Why did you leave out some elements (weightlifting, haircuts etc)?

With the increased power of this generation of consoles, every aspect has been vastly improved. The most striking thing is how much more you relate to Niko as a character, which comes from the culmination of hundreds of improvements that all work together to make him and the world around him more natural and realistic. It really is a seamless combination of a great character model, some incredible physics systems, great new fighting and shooting, incredible facial animation, thousands and thousands of lines of dialogues and strong characterisation narrative – all combining together to make this character and his plight compelling. This combination of technology, design decisions and personality has always been what Rockstar is about and I feel we've taken it to a new level with Niko and *GTAIV*. In terms of the plot, it doesn't really make sense to for Niko to need to learn all these skills – he's already learned them in the army and through his shady past.

[illegible] for 'reader ideas' for *GTA*, we've been swamped with [illegible] you incorporate fan feedback into your decision making, [illegible] ideas move from concept to execution at Rockstar North?

One of the great things about *GTA* is that it inspires people to think about features and things they think the world could benefit from – it is a game that fires people's imagination. We love receiving letters and emails from fans, but there have been a lot of people working on this for over three years and have way too many ideas to ever fit in this game, so the skill is to make sure all of the suggested new features, improvements and changes fit together to overhaul the experience of the game in a way that moves the franchise forward. Many of the guys at Rockstar North and in New York have lived this game for the last ten years, thinking of ways to improve it, trying to put new ideas in and making it a seamless whole – the way that ideas get implemented varies enormously depending on what the nature of it is – and which part of the team it involves.

ON THE DISC
We'll have more *TNA Impact* on upcoming discs
PS3 Coming Soon

PS3 REPORT

You've gotta have faith...

...but a .45 comes in handy too

From the creators of the excellent *Total Overdose* and *Chili Con Carnage*, comes *Faith And A .45*. This time, Deadline Games have traded their cartoon stylings for a far grittier tale involving a Bonnie and Clyde-style partnership. The game is set in the US during the Great Depression of the '20s and stars Luke and Ruby – two gun-toting bank robbers with nothing to lose. Everything's rosy until some powerful oil baron takes a dislike to them and sets his goons on their tails. What follows is pure carnage.

Gunfights are laced with slow-motion as the camera follows the bullet into its target, and there's a brilliant bit where Luke flings a gas can into the air and shoots it as it soars above a gang of blokes, killing them instantly. And when the two of them are popping bullets into a swooping bi-plane, it looks really exciting. Details are scarce at the moment, but there's going to be an online co-op mode and we're to expect an "emotional shooter" with a strong plot. But *Faith and a .45* doesn't even have a publisher yet. Let's hope it does soon.

Blow off The game is set during the American depression.

Team player Work together, but resist the urge to kiss her face.

Art hole The dev's clearly spent most time rendering Ruby's lovely face. Look at ugly [illegible] over there.

Stick man challenge

Can you guess what game this is?

Despite our wild claims that last month's challenge was 'near impossible', about 60 of you guessed it right. Yes, it was *Space Channel 5*. Obviously. Well done. How about this month's? Our only clue is that it's a scene from a boss battle quite late in the game. Think you know? Write in and win literally *nothing*. But *do* write all the same.

PS3 REPORT

Grap star slams WWE games

Ex-WWE star Kurt Angle – now the face of *TNA Impact* – attacks *Smackdown*

PSM3 is at an exclusive hands-on event for Midway's upcoming wrestling game, *TNA Impact*. Kurt Angle – former WWE champ who defected to TNA – is here too, and doesn't seem too fond of his time working on the *Smackdown* titles.

"In WWE," he said, "all they'd do would be scan your head and body, have you pull a mean face and that'd be it. It looked like two robots going at it. For *TNA*, they motion-captured us to get the feeling of our moves and how we wrestled, and spent hours interviewing us. It's so realistic."

Angle's departure from WWE was reputedly quite acrimonious, so you might want to take that account of

"More than just another bleak horror game"
Alone In The Dark page 16

Quitter Escaping a submission means stopping a bar in the right spot on a slider, like older *SvRs*.

"*Smackdown* 'looked like two robots going at it'"

The character models really do look the part

the *Smackdown* development process with a pinch of salt – certainly the end results have always been impressive. Still, we're glad the WWE games finally have some competition to prevent them from growing (any more) stale.

Certainly *TNA Impact* looks quite terrific – "it really captures our attitudes," says Angle – but it's fair to say that the (very) early build we played had some issues. Look to the right for more on those.

Final thoughts, Kurt? "This is going to be the biggest hit of any game ever." Hmm. You should probably take *that* with a pinch of salt as well.

Pub Midway | **Dev** Midway | **ETA** May

Features: The first play of *TNA Impact*

We clamber into *TNA*'s special six-sided ring for our hands-on...

The roster

The build we played had Kurt Angle, Samoa Joe, AJ Styles, Abyss, Christian Cage, Jeff Jarrett, Chris Sabin, Rhino, Homicide and Hernandez. Expect most of the roster, but newcomers – like Kurt's wife Karen – won't make the cut.

The gameplay

A touch limited as yet, but then all the grapplers in this build had the same (nicely simple to pull off) moves Just getting up after being knocked down was oddly hard, but that will surely be fixed. Loads faster than the methodical *SvR* too.

The visuals

Absolutely beautiful, with character models that put those of *Smackdown* – which are tremendous themselves – in the shade. Apparently only those wrestlers who sweat lots in the ring in real life will sweat in the game. Wow, hey?

The modes

We only had access to two-player singles matches, but there'll be all of TNA's signature matches – including Ultimate X, in which the wrestlers clamber along cables above the ring to reclaim the title belt – and a Career mode.

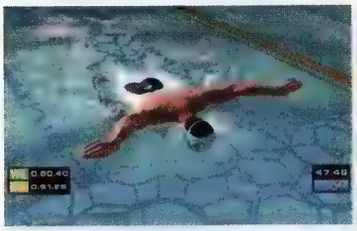
The customisation

Online mode will let people create their own tournaments and match rules, while there'll be a Create-a-wrestler mode, offering the chance to make a heel or face grap-star of your own. It'll have to go some to top *SvR*'s, mind.

ON THE DISC
Bionic Commando can be seen in action right now

The last minute shots of big importance

The freshest pics, squeezed in as we go to press

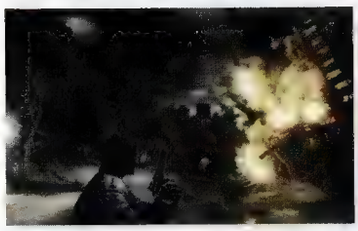


PS3 Beijing 2008 Sega prime their official Olympics tie-in

Details Pub Sega | **Dev** Eurocom | **Genre** Sports

Lowdown The Olympics are coming, which means a game is in the works. Expect *Track And Field*-style button-bashing and first-person target-shooting – same as ever, really. Thing is, this one looks gorgeous, especially the swimming events with their sparkling water and packed stadiums. It's hard to get *really* excited about another athletics game, but if they manage to implement unique controls, this could be a surprise hit. Imagine *Skate*-style analogue flicking – it could work.

ETA Summer



PS3 Alone In The Dark Ace physics add depth to the horror

Details Pub Atari | **Dev** Eden Games | **Genre** Action

Lowdown The physics system in this New York-set horror is more than just for show – it actually shapes the way you play. For example, you can use sticky tape to join objects together – a flashlight to a gun, for example. You can also use hundreds of makeshift objects. Need a stick? Smash a table and take one of the legs. It's impressive stuff and should keep this from being just another bleak horror game.

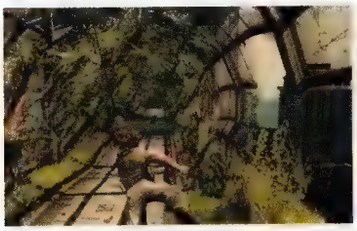
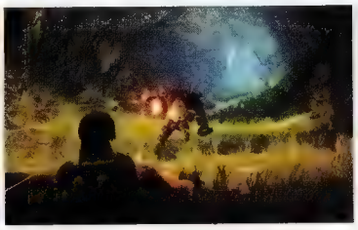
ETA Autumn

PS3 Silent Hill 5 New shots and footage emerge from the fog

Details Pub Konami | **Dev** The Collective | **Genre** Action

Lowdown Finally, we get to see the game in action, as well as screenshots that show something other than a dark, empty room. And, well, we're a bit more optimistic. The lighting and atmosphere is very nice, although the environments do look a bit sparse and lacking in detail compared to previous games. A lot of elements have been taken from the Silent Hill movie, including the awesome effect of the paint peeling from the walls as the town slips into its darker 'otherside' form.

ETA Summer

PS3 Bionic Commando More levels revealed

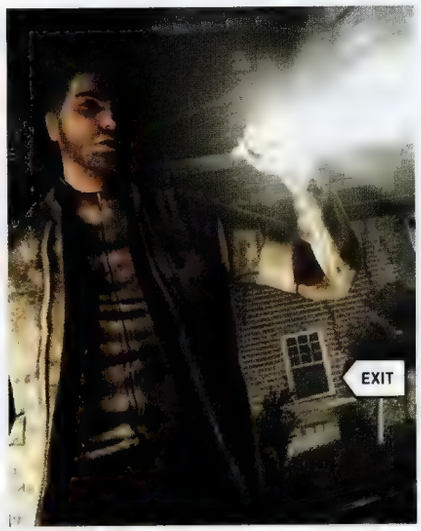
Details Pub Capcom | **Dev** GRIN | **Genre** Action

Lowdown After months of staring at the same level, Capcom have finally revealed another of *Bionic Commando*'s stages – a lush forest, with some of nicest sunshine effects ever to grace a game. When you're using your arm to swing around, you actually have to aim where you want your robo-claw to grip – you can't just swing around wildly with a single button-press like in *Spider-Man*. This should make for some exciting journeys through *Rearmed*'s gorgeous Ascension City.

ETA Summer

The Optimist

Don't worry. Be happy



A challenge? No thanks, mate – don't have the time

The creators of Alone In The Dark are giving players the option to skip entire sections of the game if they're finding them too difficult. "We want everybody to finish our game," explains producer Nour Polloni. "So we've added a DVD-style menu that lets you skip to the next chapter." Great idea – don't bother crafting a balanced game with a gradual, difficulty curve – just give us a level select cheat as a default option.

Take it easy

We don't have time for difficult games. We're too busy with our fast-paced, modern lives to bother arsing about with puzzles. That's why I was grateful when *Heavenly Sword* sign-posted the solutions to brain-teasers by having the camera zoom in on them, making them sparkle and then flashing up a message telling me what to do. Think I can be bothered solving riddles? Give me a break.

I hope the next *Silent Hill* has the option to skip all the puzzles. I just want action. I hate having to exercise my brain and use logic. Just give me some monsters to knock around with a bit of old pipe. I want big arrows hovering over characters I have to speak to. I want tutorials that last for the first three hours of the game. I want an option when I die asking if I want to play on a lower difficulty setting. Because I am a modern gamer, and this is how games should be.

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ISSUE 187 ON SALE NOW

Pub D3P | **Dev** Digital Extremes
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Dark Sector

Borrows from the best, but loses its own identity

KNOW IT NOW

- A mysterious disease similar to *Resi 4*'s? ☑
- Unique glaive/gun combo system? ☑
- Brutal decaptitation moves? ☑
- Rainbows, beautiful fields, happy times? ☒

Digital Extremes – the developers behind *Dark Sector* – have form when it comes to 'borrowing' ideas from established titles. Take *Pariah* and *WarPath* – their homages to *Halo* and *Unreal Tournament* – which were both released on the original Xbox, directly copying gameplay and plot threads. While decent enough, they clearly lacked innovation – polished experiences numbed by familiarity. So why are we so excited about *Dark Sector* – a xerox of *Resident Evil 4*? Because it's the most *significant* PS3 game of 2008 so far.

Blacking distinction The game kicks off in black and white to emphasise the feelings of Hayden. It becomes clear why later.

"Could be an expansion pack for *Resi 4*"

Dark Sector's victory isn't its pacing or characterisation or gameplay – decent as they are – but what it *represents*: cast-iron proof that PS3 is hitting its stride. It's one of the best-looking games. Full stop. And matched only by, say, *Uncharted* and *Ratchet*. More impressively, it's easily the most-technically accomplished third-party (i.e. non-Sony produced) game this side of *CoD4*, quashing the notion that PS3 'ports' can't match their Xbox 360 counterparts since Sony's machine is 'too hard' to program for. Take a glance over the pages – it looks even better in motion.

Don't get us wrong. *Dark Sector* has so many similarities to *Resident Evil 4* that it could be seen as an expansion pack for Capcom's classic. Firstly, the plot – it focuses around a city infected by a disease. The infection, like *Resi*'s Las Plagas, turns regular folk into murderous zombies. There's a shadowy figure attempting to create an army with these creatures. Then there's

Masking for it The uninfected troops wear oxygen masks so they don't contract the deadly zombie disease.

Soldier of misfortune After softening him up with a couple of melee strikes Hayden moves in for a gruesome kill.

ON THE DISC
Watch *Dark Sector* in hi-def right now
Side B

Dark Sector

"A solid PS3 debut for Digital Extremes, and shows immense promise"

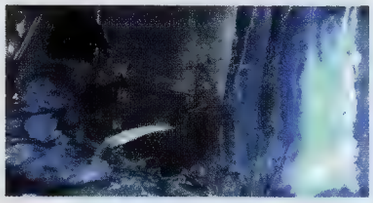
Star turn The voice of Hayden is done by Michael Rosenbaum, who plays Lex Luther in Superman spin-off show, Smallville. Even Howling Mad Murdoch from the A-Team, Dwight Schultz, lends his voice – to uber-bad guy Mesmer.

Combat

It's all glaivey, baby

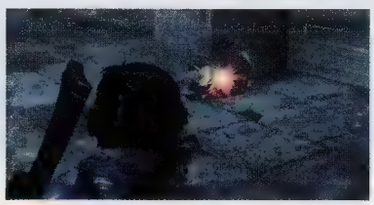
Four reasons why Hayden's glaive is great...

Fire fighter Throw the glaive into flames and you'll be wielding a fiery weapon that can set folk ablaze.



Iced gem The icy effect can freeze opponents and also create barriers to hide behind in a gun fight.

Shocking tactics Harness some electricity and you can send deadly currents through your opponents.



Go fetch When you see this orange symbol it means you can use the glaive to grab an object far away.

the female double agent – she's like Ada Wong, minus the sex appeal. And there's even a blatant rip-off of the merchant – a mysterious bloke who hangs around an underground Black Market (more on this later). It's that shameless. But while *Dark Sector* relies too much on *Resi 4* for inspiration, it's still a solid PS3 debut for Digital Extremes, and shows immense promise for their future projects – and PS3 as a whole.

Dark Sector is one of the best looking games on PS3. Fact. The story follows the recently-infected Hayden Tenno, a US special ops bloke who's been sent into the country of Lasria to cap a dictator who's planning a revolution with the deadly

"Environments melt into one shadowy blur"

Shadow of the colossus The enormous colossus beast might be bulky but it can climb and leap around like King Kong. This makes for a great showdown battle when you fight it later on.

disease. The way Hayden vaults over barriers realistically (press ◎) is impressive – and even the way he strides purposefully with his weapon drawn looks superb. The sun-drenched vistas that stretch across the game's city of Larissa look great too, far more appealing than the jaggy brownness of, for instance, *Blacksite: Area 51* (reviewed page 76).

Pro Evolution

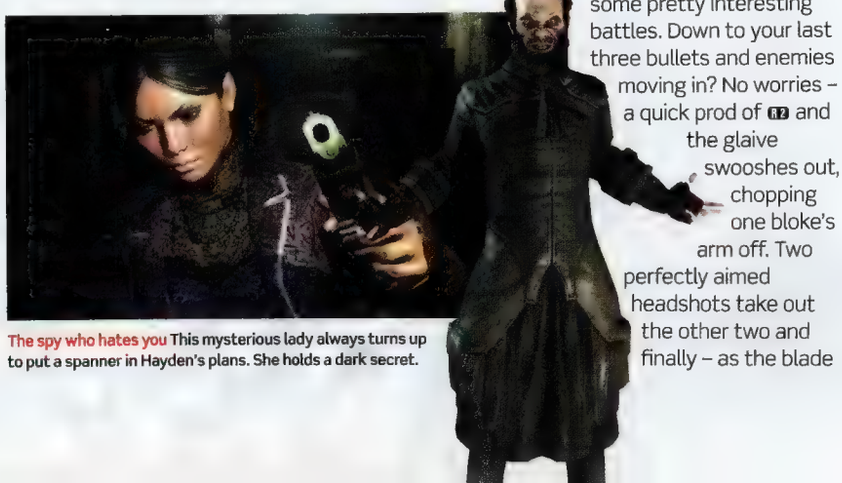
All of this beauty comes from the Evolution engine. Created by Digital Extremes, it feels like you're playing a slick pre-rendered movie at times. It's just a shame that most of *Dark Sector* is drowned in, well, darkness; while this creates a moody atmospheric feel, it hides some excellent level design. The action's weighty and visceral – hacking away at your enemy with your razor-sharp glaive (◎) before performing a Finisher move slices his arm clean off. Eugh.

Wall rides **Think that jump down is too high? No problem. Hayden can leap down and drag his glaive into the wall to slow the plummet to earth.**

Leisurely stroll

We can't help noticing Hayden is a slow walker, mind. Running (hold ⊗) is slightly better, though steering Hayden around enclosed areas is like riding a motorbike – he leans to one side when sprinting.

The best aspect of *Dark Sector* is the aforementioned glaive. It's a boomerang/sword hybrid that you can fling at enemies (R2) while firing your pistol with the other hand (R1). This makes for some pretty interesting battles. Down to your last three bullets and enemies moving in? No worries – a quick prod of R2 and the glaive swooshes out, chopping one bloke's arm off. Two perfectly aimed headshots take out the other two and finally – as the blade

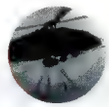


The spy who hates you This mysterious lady always turns up to put a spanner in Hayden's plans. She holds a dark secret.

Dark Sector

"Almost every other level is set in a cave, creepy monastery or graveyard"

Chopper down



There are a couple of helicopters to swat out of the sky. These see you involved in a tense cat-and-mouse chase, with you taking pot-shots with a rocket-launcher.

returns back to Hayden – it cuts the last one in half. Ouch. The glaive can be used for other things too, like retrieving ammo crates from far away – press L1 to aim at them and quickly replenish your supplies – but it's the moves you learn later that really sets the weapon apart from anything you've used before (See It's All Glaivey for more). You can even control the glaive's flight path by hitting R2 after it's been thrown. This slows down time and allows you to guide its path with the Sixaxis. The puzzles that require you to perform this are increasingly annoying, mind you – you end up having to sling it through small gaps towards sources of electricity to charge it up before destroying magnetic door locks. There's too much of this sort of thing throughout *Dark Sector*.

Hot stuff You can still use your glaive to perform melee moves when it's powered-up. As proved here.

Throw and behold Hayden's glaive will ping off walls and into any enemies stupidly stood in the way.

Cool Move

Dual-wielding pistols and sub-machine guns has been done to death but *Dark Sector*'s glaive-and-pistol combo is a refreshing change. While waiting for your weapon to return from its damage-making, you can empty a clip to quicken your foes' trip back to God.

Battle tactics

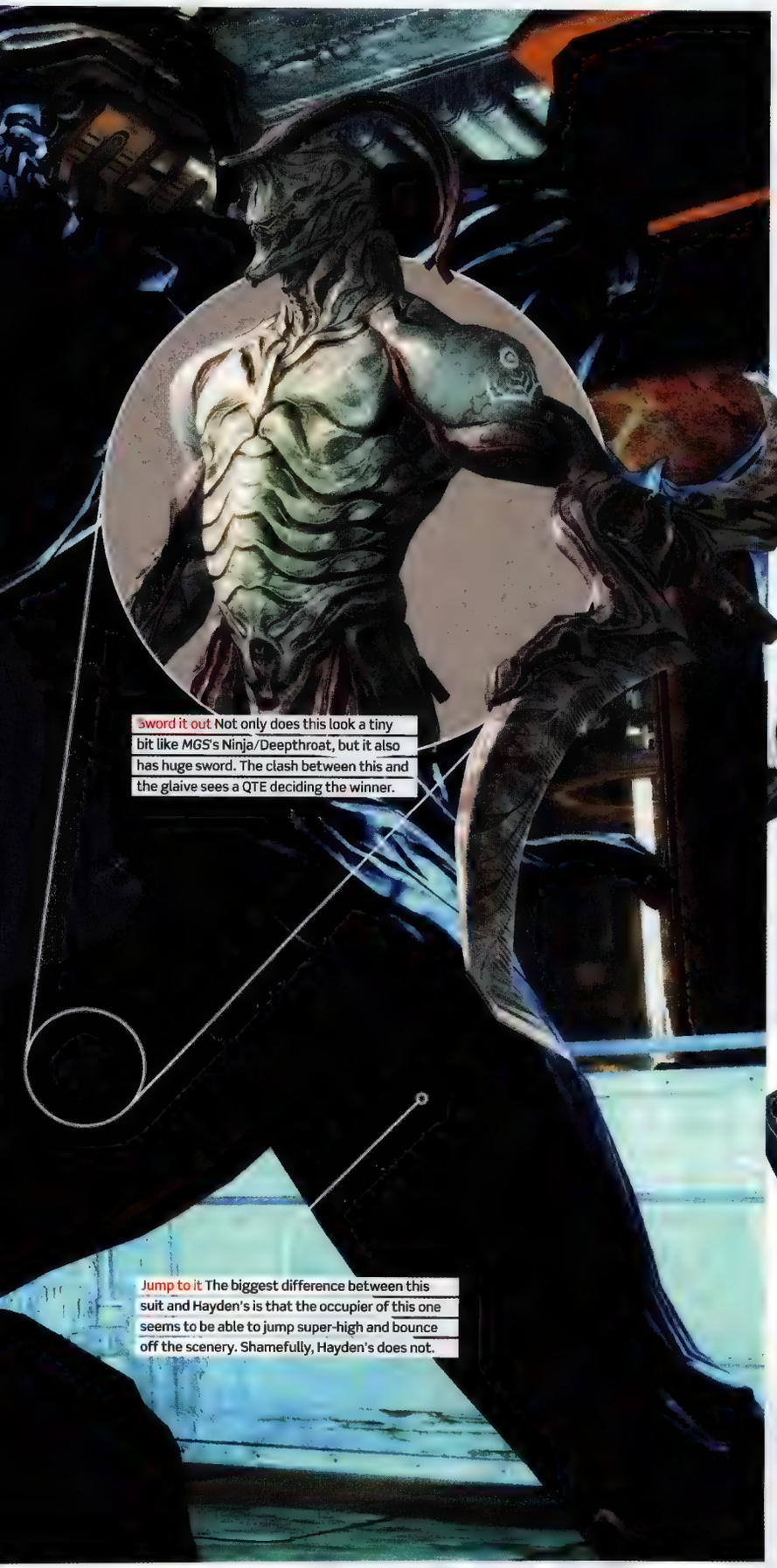
Epic boss battle

Hayden has his ass kicked by a mysterious foe, but earns his revenge with some nifty new moves

Armoured core The tough suit protects Hayden from taking too much damage from bullets and any heavy duty weaponry. It coats him all over, so not even sneak attacks from behind will hurt.

Block and roll This battle sees Hayden parrying sword and projectiles from a mysterious figure by harnessing the power of a plasma shield (△). You'll need to roll away when he gets too close.

"Coats Nathan all over, protecting him from damage"



Sword it out Not only does this look a tiny bit like *MGS*'s Ninja/Deepthroat, but it also has huge sword. The clash between this and the glaive sees a QTE deciding the winner.

Jump to it The biggest difference between this suit and Hayden's is that the occupier of this one seems to be able to jump super-high and bounce off the scenery. Shamefully, Hayden's does not.

Camera, action

Certain sections require you to sneak through rooms filled with cameras that trigger locks if they spot someone. Hold △ and you'll temporarily turn invisible and pass through undetected.

But this isn't the only disappointing aspect of *Dark Sector*. The dark environments melt into one shadowy blur – almost every other level is set in a cave, creepy monastery or graveyard. Then there are the undead creatures. Sure, they're quite scary as they run at you, but when they make with the cloaking devices you end up in gunfights with *invisible enemies*.

Even though the range of weapons on offer is pretty powerful – from shotguns to sniper rifles – the system to upgrade and buy new ones is faulty. The Black Market can be found by finding manholes and slipping down to a secret gun shop. Here you can add upgrades to your current weapons with power-ups you find as you go (like Accuracy or Stopping Power) or buy and sell guns. As in *Resi 4*, you have a case to store your unused weapons, but from start to finish we only ever had about three guns because there just isn't enough cash lying about for you to be able to afford them all – meaning you can only stare at the better weapons.

Be the boss

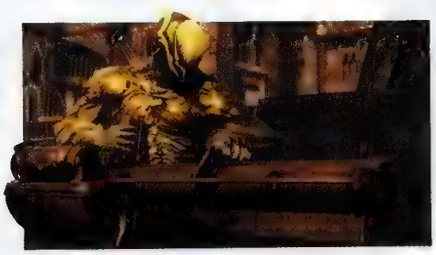
Many of the boss battles are exciting, though. Taking on the colossus monster, smashing up a church and burning him with your fire glaive is a thrill, as is using the glaive to freeze

Stalk about it This sly beast is known as the Stalker thanks to it's ability to cloak itself while hunting its prey.

Blind fire You can make out the outline of the Stalker as the water splashes against him. That's your cue to shoot.

"The battle with the final boss will leave you cold"

falling water and encasing an enemy in ice before blowing him into a million pieces. There's a Jackal tank for you to jump in, which can plough through barriers, fire bullets and launch neat little missiles that will take down groups of enemies in a single blast. You even learn an invisibility skill later in the game that allows you to sneak up on a foe and do them in with an instant Finisher move. It's just a shame



Ivor Big Gun You get to blast an immense chaingun later on in the game. It'll slow you down though.

Battle axes

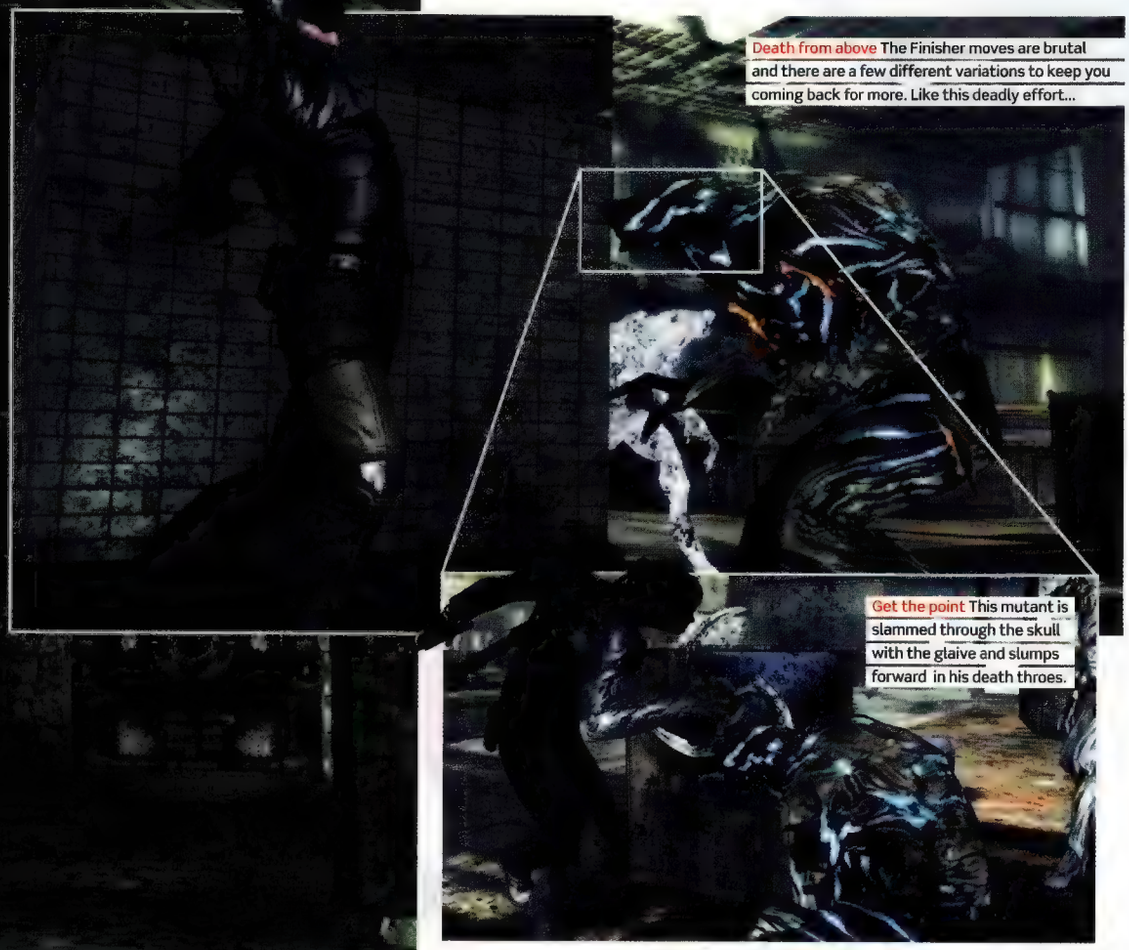
All of the hardest soldiers carry shields. You'll have knock the shields out of the way with your glaive before you can gun them down.

that, for all of the entertaining bits, there's so much repetition and disappointment. Take the moment when Hayden finally gets hold of <mild spoiler alert> the special ninja suit toward the end of the game. A samurai soldier who easily duffs you up early on was wearing this, so stepping into it should turn Hayden into an invincible beast, right? Nope. The only difference is that he can take a few more bullets and looks a bit different, which squashed our hopes of finally becoming a sort of superhero <spoiler ends>. Oh, and the battle with the final boss will leave you cold.

Dark Sector will provide you with hours of relentless action that you'll be more than happy to spend your time with, but this definitely isn't Digital Extremes' opus. The weapon selection is stilted because of the unbalanced way in which you purchase them, the puzzles are seriously hit-and-miss, and the plot fails to grab your attention because you've

Dark Sector

"This isn't the finished article that we had been hoping for"



Death from above The Finisher moves are brutal and there are a few different variations to keep you coming back for more. Like this deadly effort...

Get the point This mutant is slammed through the skull with the glaive and slumps forward in his death throes.

Ice-capades The way you can freeze opponents is visually impressive. You can even throw your ice glaive into a pool of water to create a surface to walk across. Nice.

heard the stories of infection and biological warfare before – as recently as *Uncharted: Drake's Fortune*, in fact.

Almost, but not quite

As it stands, this is a stunning technical achievement, a dark horse, a must-rent and *almost* a must-buy, but it lacks the variety, pacing or innovation to make it truly essential. Still, when a game this off-radar comes good, you've got to smile. We'd love a sequel (which seems likely judging by the ending) to expand on the fresh ideas found here, but until they dare to rely on some of their own ideas, Digital Extremes will always be the bridesmaid and never the bride. They've got the tools and potential to be a respected force, but *Dark Sector* isn't quite the finished article we were hoping for. **Nathan Irvine**

Fave Feature

PSM3 Verdict

***Dark Sector* contains...**

Decapitations | Walking tanks | Stealth bits | Lots of darkness | Motion control

Overall A solid shooter that looks absolutely beautiful. But the the lack of variety hinders it.

76

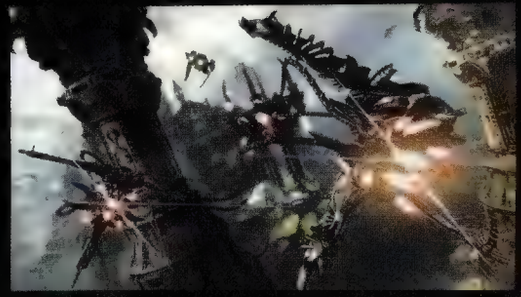
PLAYSTATION 3

THE EVOLUTION OF FRAGGING

Unreal TOURNAMENT III

FROM THE STUDIO THAT BROUGHT YOU *GEARS OF WAR*®

18



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MIDWAY

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POWERED BY gamespy

PS3

Pub Disney | **Dev** Black Rock Studios
Players 1-16 (online) | **Genre** Racing
FYI The first contender to *MotorStorm*

ON THE DISC
We should have Pure on the next disc

Pure

SSX on ATVs? *Motorstorm 2* beware...

Joel Snape

We're being shown new ATV sim *Pure* by developer Black Rock's Jason Avent. "It's almost like a platform game," he says as he nudges the right analogue stick forward to preload his vehicle's suspension, then yanks it back to jump off the crest of a muddy hill, crash-landing on a cliff track that isn't part of the main course. "You've got to think vertically".

Jason's used to thinking vertically, of course. Formerly a producer with Climax Studios, he worked on the *ATV Fury* and *Moto GP* games. Now he's putting that experience to good use, working on a less gravity-restricted take on ATV racing. Pure uses the same physics as other bouncy four-wheelers – the key to keeping your speed up is riding the bumps and hitting the downslopes when you jump – but for size, scale and scares, the jumps match anything of the drops in the *SSX* series. The amount of airtime on offer also means that *Pure* can mimic the snowboarding series' array of stunts, too – obviously there are standard ATV moves like the Nac-Nac, but a three-tiered trick system makes bigger and better moves available as you store up boost. With a full meter, signature tricks like the 'Superhero' become available – picture a Superman seat grab where you let go of the seat and pirouette – giving you a burst of speed and refilling the meter if you land them. The team have even had a go at tricks themselves – "I can jump about six feet," claims Jase – and recruited ATV extremist Wes Miller to help. "He got stabbed in a bar in Mexico while we were following him around."

Dirt and grime! The terrain is bumpy and as brutal as you'd expect.

INFLUENCES

What goes into *Pure*

ATV Offroad Fury | *SSX Tricky* | *Freekstyle* | *MotorStorm* | *Gripshift* | Mountain biking

And then there's that other game. So how does Pure match up to *MotorStorm*? Well, the big surprise is... it could be even better. It's certainly prettier. Sony's dustbowl derby might do well at scorched mudflats, but Pure spangles its courses with thousands of blades of grass and tiny flowers. "The obvious comparison is *DiRT*, but when you see them side by side it's sort of unfair," claims Jason, "We've got about ten times the amount of detail and foliage they have." The draw distances are enormous, and the courses are labyrinthine – again, the *SSX* comparison comes in as there are entire stretches that you'll only be able to access with a keen sense of timing and/or a supremely grunty ATV.

Location, location

The game will have seven distinct locations – or styles of scenery – but with their graphical style already established, creating different routes within them is fairly simple for the devs. And you shouldn't get lonely – although the AI needs a bit of tweaking at the moment, having 16 riders in each race keeps things frantic. You'll also be able to play with just as many people online... although there's no word yet on whether you'll be able to punch them off their ATVs. When we pointed out just how much *Pure* reminded us of the mighty *SSX* Jason was quick to point out that "You can go *up* hills," in Black Rock's racer, but he shouldn't be so quick to shrug off the comparison. This generation of consoles needs a terrifyingly OTT racer.

Will it be *Pure*? There's a chance of it...

QUOTE

Developer insight

"I wanted to get that feeling you get when you're mountain biking, where you're pedalling up the mountain and you're knackered, but then you get above the treeline and you can see for miles. Or when you steam around a corner and nearly off a cliff – that point where your bravery outstrips your ability."

Jason Avent,
Lead Producer

MOTOR MADNESS Riders fly through the air after crashing in a *MotorStorm*-like fashion

PSM3 Reckons

We'd have liked to see some MX vehicles as well – but the physics are convincing and the graphics glorious. This could be special.

ETA
2008

PS3

Pub Activision | **Dev** Traveller's Tales
Players 1-2 | **Genre** Action
FYI The Indy movies in Lego form

ON THE DISC
There'll be more on Lego Indy on the next disc

Lego Indiana Jones: The Videogame

Indy still kicks ass, even in plastic

Andy Kelly

"Nazis? I hate these guys"

With the kids in mind, *Lego Indy* won't feature any Nazis. Developer Traveller's Tales said, "Lego have already replaced them with another anonymous, genocidal, trenchcoat-wearing master race." But Nazis aside, some of your favourite Aryan villains *are* in the game, including Herr Toht.

"Throw me the idol"

In the jungles of Peru, Indy risks his life to grab a precious idol before rival archaeologist Rene Belloq nicks it from him and leaves him for dead. But, naturally, Indy gets one up on the cheeky swine and escapes to victory in the back of a plane. This scene, the opening of Raiders Of The Lost Ark, is recreated in *Lego Indiana Jones*, with the tomb exploration and escape parts extended to incorporate Traveller's Tales' familiar Lego gameplay and puzzles. And, *of course*, you get to flee from a giant rolling boulder.

"Give your mouth a rest, doll."
Since Traveller's Tales' Lego games are heavily co-op orientated, Indy will be joined by a number of characters, including the leading ladies from each film – sexy Nazi Elsa Schneider from The Last Crusade, Marion from Raiders Of The Lost Ark and Willie Scott from Temple Of Doom.

"Snakes... why did it have to be snakes?"
The *Lego Star Wars* games were famed for their comedic takes on scenes from the films. How *Lego Indy* will recreate the bit when the Ark Of The Covenant is opened and everyone's faces melt – and make it funny – remains to be seen. We're also looking forward to Indy in the snake pit, the chase at Club Obi-Wan and the final scenes in the Canyon of the Crescent Moon.

"You call THIS archaelogy?"
Expect vehicle sections and minigames. We reckon you'll get to slide down a mountain in a dinghy (Temple Of Doom), jump between trucks in the desert (Raiders Of The Lost Ark) and charge through Nazi defences in a motorbike and sidecar with Sean Connery (The Last Crusade). Although the vehicle bits in *LSW* was its weakest asset, hopefully they'll be better in *Lego Indy*.

PSM3 Reckons
We can pretty much guarantee this is going to rock. Hard. If it sticks to the tried and tested *Lego Star Wars* format, it can't fail.

ETA
MAY 2008

PS3

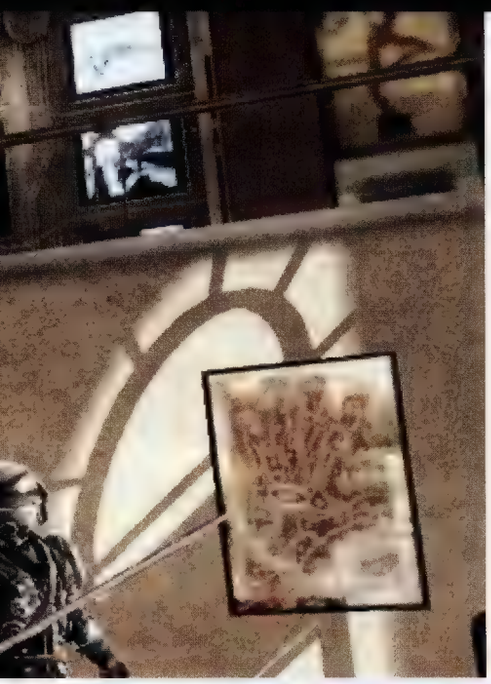
Pub Eidos | **Dev** Widescreen Games
Players 1 | **Genre** Action
FYI Wreak havoc across history.

ON THE DISC

Throw me a bone. We hope there are environmental attacks. We want to impale this sucker on something.

Blade of glory. Mace versus sword – who'll win? Well, you, obviously. But it'll be an interesting battle.

Give him a kicking. Owen looks fairly nimble. Can we expect Prince Of Persia-style combat acrobatics?



Highlander

You're immortal, but it still won't be easy... Andy Kelly

Ed Woolf is from Widescreen Games, the developers behind *Highlander*.

You may be wondering how you can make a challenging movie tie-in game based around a character who is immortal, but developer Ed Woolf put our fears to rest immediately during an exclusive one-on-one chat. "If you get impaled by a sword, no problem – just pull the sword out of your guts and use it to behead your enemy." Nice.

"This has, of course, also created challenges to level design," he continues, "But we've managed to create a variety of traps which end up beheading the player if they're not careful." So it won't just be enemies we'll have to be wary of, but the environments themselves.

Go your Owen way

So who's the lead character then? "You are a previously unknown immortal called Owen MacLeod, who was born in the Scottish highlands during the Roman occupation of Britain." The story is set in present day New York, but through flashbacks you'll be able to relive events in Owen's past, including a brief stint as a gladiator in Pompeii and a journey across fourteenth century Japan.

"We have created a story with many new characters," says Woolf, "But there is one familiar character Highlander fans will be happy to see. Working closely with the TV show's writer, David Abramowitz, ensures that we are in tune with what Highlander fans want and expect. The script has been worked on in tandem with the game for over two years now."

The game also features an in-depth fighting system that lets you use both your fists and a number of deadly swords. "With regards fighting combos, one thing you'll be able to do in *Highlander* is to chain combos together in whatever way you want," says Woolf, "So it's really a very flexible combat system that gives you full control over to use it. The better skilled your use of combo attacks, the more experience points you can earn which allows you to unlock cool new combo attacks. As well as this we have a good variety between time periods, providing the player with new challenges as the game plays out."

Rumble in the jungle

So what was it like to work on PS3, then? "We've been impressed with the power of the engine," Woolf tells us. "There are some differences to developing on PS3 to other consoles, in relation to memory management for example, and our goal is to create as great a looking game as possible. In addition to making use of the Sixaxis, we will also be one of the first games to feature Rumble functionality." Could this be a surprise hit? Maybe so...

Grab ass If you don't fancy slashing people up, grab hold of them and give them a right good bruising.

PSM3 Reckons

It looks surprisingly good, and hopping between time periods should keep the action varied. Just mind your head, eh?

Pub Codemasters | **Dev** Blue Omega
Players TBC | **Genre** Action
FYI Originally a mod for *UT2004* on PC.

ON THE DISC
We'll have *Damnation* on a future disc

QUOTE

Developer insight

"You can't say you're evolving the genre without evolving the multi-player, so we've a separate team working on *Damnation*'s online components. There'll be modes to cater for the skills in the single-player game, but we can't say much more."

Jacob Minkoff
Lead Game Designer

Rourke on Boxwell-side The hero's tale is one of revenge – and the search for his fiancee. Obviously.

Dead rising Zombie-like beasts similar to *Uncharted*'s Descendents are fodder.

Die, robot Robots too? All we need are Nazis and gangsters and the enemy list is complete.

Sword it out Some sets of bad guys wield samural swords in battle. They look creepy too.

Damnation

Odd psuedo-FPS leaves us feeling confused

Nathan Irvine

Our initial reaction to Codie's *Damnation* is confusion. Even after sitting through a twenty minute play-through, we couldn't explain what the hell was going on. The chaps from Blue Omega are keen to repeat the phrase "taking the first-person shooter vertical" but we're actually watching a *third*-person shooter. *Damnation*'s lead game designer Jacob Minkoff argues, "People have considered *Gears Of War* an FPS, and what we're doing is the same - moving the camera back slightly from the character so you can see around, but it still plays like an FPS." There's a grain of truth in this - there isn't a cover system allowing you to hide and recover. Instead *Damnation* relies on frenetic FPS-style shooting.

WD naughty

Thankfully the story is far more straightforward if, well, a bit rubbish. Evil baron WD Prescott (really) wants to rule all, but our chiselled hero Hamilton Rourke would rather he didn't. And Rourke's also got to save his fiancée from the wily dictator. *Damnation* plays out like a mix between *Prince Of Persia*'s acrobatics and *Drake's Fortune*'s gun-blasting sections. You'll be able to choose your own path from A to B across huge landscapes that can take up to three hours (real-time) to cross. You can shimmy up lampposts, smash through windows to surprise enemies and backflip up to high ledges - which will make those folk afraid of heights feel a bit queasy as you look down into the abyss below.

It all looks nice too, which is no surprise since *Damnation* is using the *Unreal 3* engine. The animation is being tweaked to a high standard too, to show Rourke scuffing his knees on ill-timed leaps or scrambling for grip as he misjudges a ledge, desperately clawing for purchase before he falls. We're also told there will be a few vehicles to bomb around on, including a motorbike that you can ride across walls with. Nice.

Fight here, fight now

Hamilton will get some help with his plight from a gang of AI-controlled freedom fighters. Each one will have their own personality and a sub-plot that will affect the overall story outcome. Sadly, you won't be able to order them around with squad commands but they will attack and hide efficiently, as you'd expect. However, judging by the kaleidoscope of different enemies you can see from these screens, we're not sure exactly what other forces will be getting involved. There are aliens, zombies, Helghast-esque goons with green eyes and porkpie hats, and even robots. It's as if the developers have thrown every bit of cannon fodder they've ever seen into the mix so as to cover every base. Fingers crossed that *Damnation* remains focused enough to see these ideas through.

Right now, we're nonplussed about *Damnation* - we can't say that it looks like offering anything that we haven't seen before. We'll give it the benefit of the doubt, though, as we've only seen early preview code - the proof will be in the, er, review 'pudding'. The environments are amazing and we like the idea of attacking stages in any way we see fit - but we'll need to have a proper play session before we can even begin to understand it.

Lady killer This is the oddly-named (but sexy) Yekecan. Maybe you'll get to play as her.

"It's as if they're trying to cover every base"

PSM3 Reckons

This could be a surprise hit if the vehicle bits are strong and there's enough diversity. But our fleeting glimpse suggests otherwise.

ETA Oct 2008

Pub Konami | **Dev** Kojima Productions
Players 1 - 24 | **Genre** Online
FYI Classic *MGS* with an online twist

ON THE DISC
We have some MGO on Future Disc

Sneak day Team play at work – two guys distract the enemy while his mates sneak up.

Metal Gear Online

Online gaming gets potential new killer app

Andy Kelly

We've taken part in dozens of online game demos, and it's very rare that they run smoothly. After numerous attempts to set up a 16-player Team Deathmatch with journalists from other parts of Europe, lag and frequent disconnections forced us to give up and set up a four-player match with our British chums. And it was for the best. *Metal Gear Online*'s control scheme, a facsimile of *MGS4*'s, is best-suited to slow, methodical creeping than chaotic Deathmatches.

We began by creating a character. Initially there are a handful of clothing options to choose from, with more to be unlocked later or bought at the 'MGO Store'. We decked our guy out in a baseball cap, balaclava and T-shirt. You can even adjust his voice, changing the pitch to make him a surly baritone or a squawking twit. We went for the latter, which we instantly regretted after playing with the game's preset voice commands. "Yikes! The enemy's here!" our man would squeal like a startled hairdresser.

Perking up

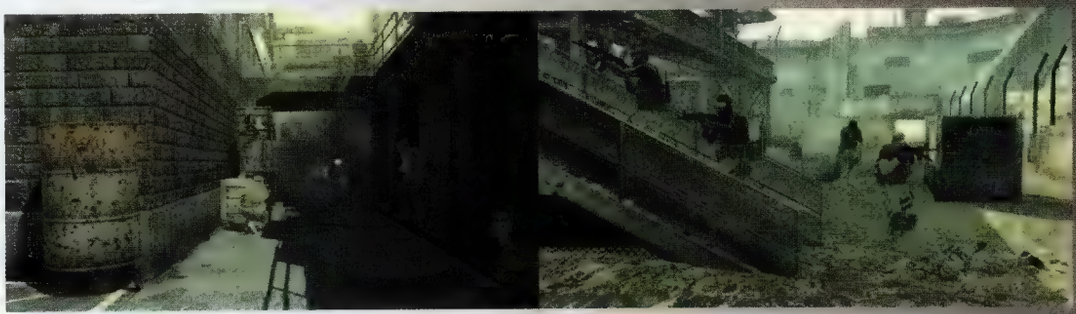
But the most interesting part of creating a character is setting his perks. Oh, sorry, not perks. That's *Call Of Duty 4*. But that's basically what they are, in all but name. You can select up to four abilities for your soldier including expertise with certain weapons, improved automatic lock-on and faster running speed. And it works as well as it does in *CoD*, letting you tailor your character to your own playing style.

Once you've created your alter-ego it's time to go into battle. There are loads of game modes, most of which are top secret, but we played two, Team Deathmatch and Bases. The first is self-explanatory, but Bases less so. Each team (comprised of

TOP TRICKS

Hide and sneak

This being *MGS*, stealth is often the best solution...



Hidden and dangerous Oil drums and cardboard boxes spawn randomly in the level, which means hiding in them among a crowd of enemies is a proven method of getting the jump on other players. Sneaky.

Stealth of options You can just about see a Metal Gear Mk II using stealth camouflage at the bottom of the screen. We're not sure if your character can equip it, but it would be great if you could.

Snake up Yep, that looks like Snake. Will we see a return of *MGS3*'s 'Snake vs everyone' mode?

two players each in our game, but bigger ones will be available) move through the map and take control of three bases. First to turn all three their team's colour wins. This makes for some frantic matches as you struggle to defend and capture bases.

And it's here that the game's tactical side shines. After all, *Metal Gear* was never a pure action game. One technique we favoured was leaving girly magazines strewn around each base, so that when the enemy tried to capture it they'd start ogling the girls and earn themselves a sniper bullet in the head. There's also an 'E-Reveal' grenade that, when tossed, sends out a wave of energy that reveals enemy positions, even through walls. Claymore mines are also a popular choice, and you can even eschew a main weapon in favour of a bullet-proof riot shield that you can bash enemies across the head with. The variety is incredible.

Doffing your map

As we go to print, the game's full map list is still under wraps. We were only allowed to play in two – City Ambush, a bleak, bombed city with abandoned cars strewn everywhere and, more excitingly, Grozny Grad, the Russian nuclear base from *MGS3*. We also spotted two strange options while setting up the four-player match: 'Snake can play? Y/N' and 'Drebin Mode'. We've no idea what these are, but they're intriguing nonetheless. Playable Snake? Looks like it.

We were impressed with *MGO*. It's a robust, solid online shooter with nice, if a little drab, visuals. The lag and disconnection problems will be gone by the time of release, so expect a mix of large-scale warfare and smaller, tactical games. Rumours suggest a trial version of *MGO* will be bundled with *MGS4*, or a full version on the PS Store, at a similar price to *Warhawk*.

PSM3 Reckons

Looks plain, but excellent tactical opportunities. *MGS*' trademark humour and unique game modes make this an interesting prospect.

Pub Take 2 Interactive | **Dev** Rockstar North
Players 1-2 | **Genre** Action
FYI The latest from Rockstar's official site.

ON THE DISC
Check out last issue's GTAIV trailer spotlight

Grand Theft Auto IV

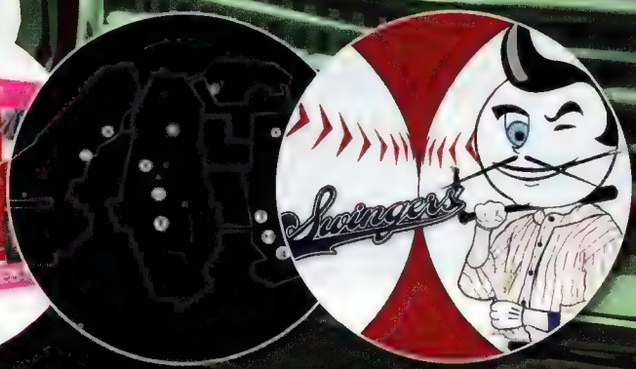
Five best *GTAIV* website nuggets

Joel Snape

Car porn The Dilettante is massively expensive, but don't let that worry you too much.

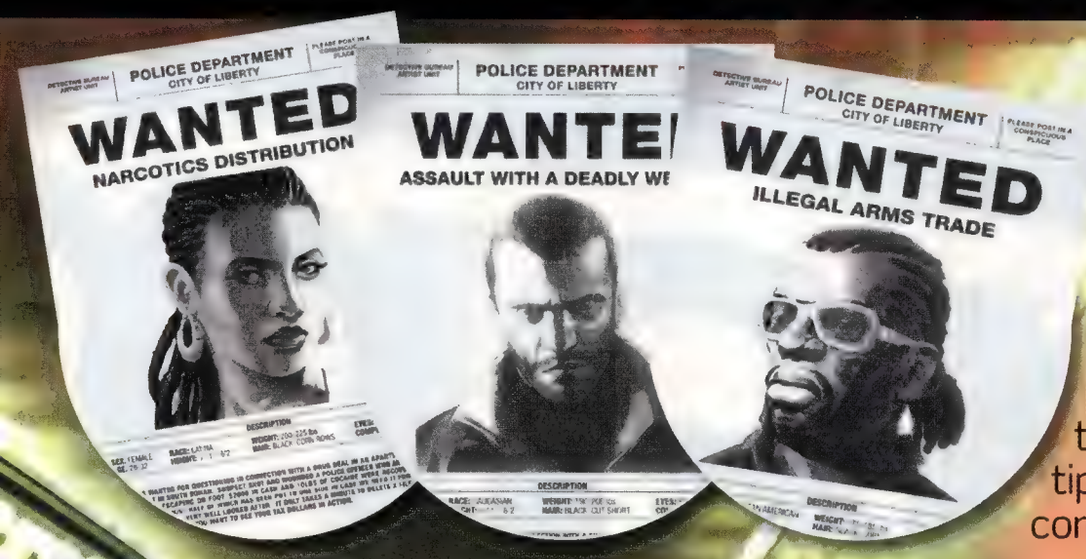
1 The Dilettante

"Bad plus good equals better for everyone!" boasts the mercury-slick voiceover for the Karin Dilettante, *GTA*'s new luxury hybrid saloon. It's got low fuel emissions and comes in a range of colours, but you might be more interested in features that wouldn't normally make it into a car ad – the windows break easily for quick hotwiring, and the bumper stays shiny even if you run over a pedestrian. It retails at $39,999 – but it's free if you find one on the street and leave its owner in a quivering pile on the tarmac.



2 Sightseeing opportunities

There are new places to go and things to gawp at. Hot tickets promise to be the Liberty City Swingers baseball team and Banging On Trashcan Lids For An Hour – the *GTA* take on Stomp.



3 Liberty City's most wanted

Rockstar have LCPD-sponsored mugshots claiming 'rigorous racial profiling' is the only solution to the crimewave. Email their tipoff line at tips@libertypolice.com for a cheeky surprise.

Love meet
Making you whole again...
PERSONALITY
FEATURED
SHARE
Congratulations! You are a:
BORING LOSER
Your development as a human obviously stopped during 8th grade. You are one of those people who carry their teenage angst with them for life. You find comfort in dressing as an elf and fighting friends in the park at night. You are socially inept, your clothing doesn't fit you well, and your friends are embarrassed to introduce you to their friends. Worst of all, you love children's things like action figures and video games. You think that being deliberately wacky will mask your deep-seated inferiority complex but even your own reflection is starting to hate you. You are a loser. But you are not alone! Losers like to copulate too! There are others just like YOU, right here at Love-meet.net. Join today!

4 Getting online

Tw@-brand net cafes are dotted around the city. Weazel News and Whiz Mobile both have net presence, but it's love-meet.net we like most. Its personality test offers horribly accurate results – so far it's called us Moron, Loser, Pervert and Whore. Then it tried to hook us up with a man who offered to "play your love zones like a parrot inside a grand piano". See www.rockstargames.com/IV/

5 The multi-player

GTA's multi-player modes are all but certain to include match types like Cops 'n' Crooks, Bomb Da Base and the terrifying-sounding Hangman's Noose. Expect these, plus established modes like Deathmatch and Co-Op.

PSM3 Reckons

With the world starting to take shape, this is looking like the smartest, funniest and deepest *GTA* yet. Can't wait.

ETA
APRIL 2007

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(and news, previews, reviews, features, videos, screens etc)

Your words, your pictures, your videos...

Your Space

Start

42 Letters
Choice cuts from the PSM3 mail sack.

43 PSN Mail
Send us a message over the PS3 Network.

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Ex-Sony guru answers your queries.

44 Poll Position
Vote – you'll see democracy in action.

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Our eight favourite readers this month.

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The best gamer videos out there.

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Online Play the team at online games and win big

Letters To PSM3

Your letters and emails, sifted and printed

Less shooting, more puzzling – please?

LETTER

I'm 32 and have been a gamer for over 20 years. I want to inquire about a genre that has seemingly faded away in the recent ages of gaming – whatever happened to point and click adventures?

Don't get me wrong. I absolutely love extreme action games just as much as, or maybe more than, the next guy – my all time favourites are *God Of War*, *Assassin's Creed* and *Uncharted: Drake's Fortune*. But sometimes I just want to sit back and exercise my brain rather than indulge the usual bloodlust, destruction, addiction and adrenaline rush that comes with modern gaming. And I don't mean sinking my teeth into a PSP puzzle game, I mean an adventure with great story, great graphics, great voice acting and challenging non-violent puzzles based on combining items found in tucked-away corners of a spectacular world.

> "What happened to point-and-click adventures?"

A recent PS2 game that had that formula lightly weaved into its action was *Fahrenheit* – and I must say that was brilliant, but unfortunately that's as close as you got nowadays. Yeah I know there were the likes of *Syberia II* some years back, but they are very few scattered here and there. Even Sierra, who were the number one publishers in the point-and-click adventure genre, stopped making them. If you're an older generation gamer you'll remember all *The King's Quest* games, *Phantasmagoria* and even *Gabriel Knight*.

I realize that this genre was mainly concentrated on PC, but I truly believe PS3's power and versatility is the right platform for any gaming experience. Will developers ever bring back a genre that has been forgotten? Or will they play it safe and keep pumping out shooter after slasher after racer?

Lou Attia, email

An excellent letter Lou, and we agree wholeheartedly. Some of our favourite games were point-and-clickers – *Monkey Island*, *Full Throttle*, *Broken Sword* – but as it stands, the genre's dead. *Broken Sword* and *Monkey Island* both went 3D and suffered badly. We're hearing great things about *Fahrenheit* follow up *Heavy Rain*, mind, so hold tight.

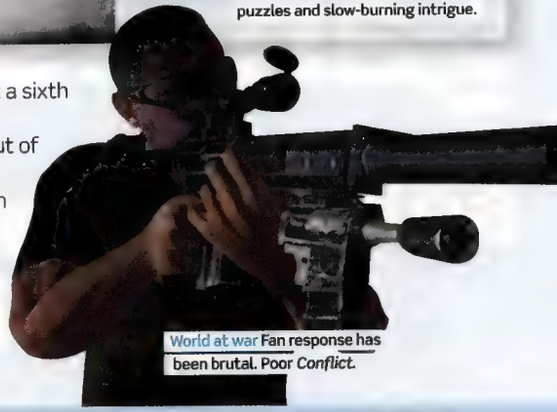
Action stations People love chaos and fiery action these days, not puzzles and slow-burning intrigue.

Denied plops

Just writing to say your score of *Conflict: Denied Ops* was, if anything, too generous. What's happened to Bradley, Jones, Conners and the butch sniper woman? As a huge fan of the *Conflict* series this new game really is a bayonet to the goolies. Apart from the kamikaze (lets dumb it down and make it into a first-person shooter) change of direction, the whole thing plays and looks like it's been made at a sixth form college.

I hope Pivotal don't go out of business having wasted their time and resources on this crusty turd. Still at least it'll score points with tree-hugging pacifists, as it really makes war seem depressing.

Michael Veal, Essex



World at war Fan response has been brutal. Poor *Conflict*.

"You What?"

Thanks for writing. No. Really

Dear Jim, fix it for me to play *Rollcage* on my PSP. It was the greatest ever PSone game.
HOP5, email

Don't know about that, but we *can* fix it for you to be featured in the glorious 'You What?' column. See?

What's everyone's problem with the *CoD4* servers? I can get into a game in about five seconds.

James Halsey, email
Sounds like you're one of the lucky few – almost everyone else we know has problems

PSNMail

Our PS3 username is PSM3uk. Send us a message. Please

Hundred year war

So, it's the hundredth issue soon. Are you expecting a telegram from the Queen, or Dan G? **Amhrannabh Fiann**

We can but hope. We'd rather have a telegram from Hideo Kojima or Ken Kutaragi, mind you.

The price is right

I don't mind the price increase, but we can expect more features like the Sonic Adventure article and extra gifts? **Countblammo**

You certainly can.

Duty calls

What's your favourite *CoD4* map? **midwayoo7uk**

It varies, but now we're digging Bloc. Sneaking through the buildings and knifing sneaky snipers is an absolute thrill.

Short straw

I have a major question. Do you like short shorts? **MonkeyChief**

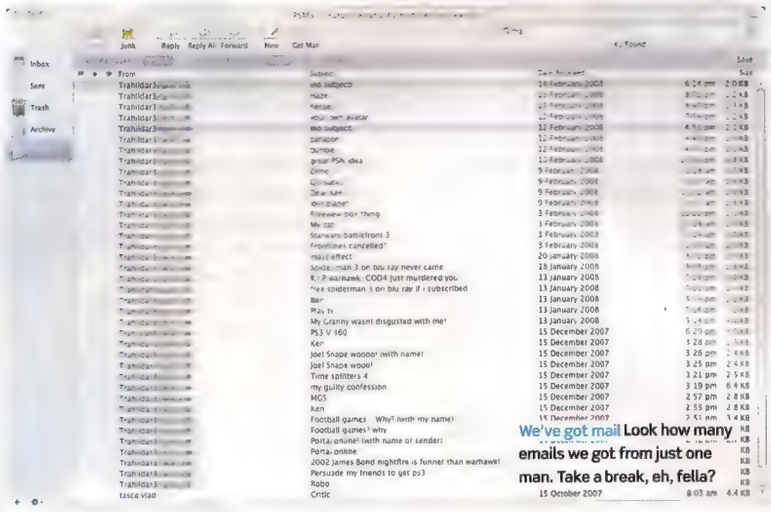
Yes. In fact we're wearing short shorts now. Who's wearing short shorts? We're wearing short shorts. Etc..

Trigger unhappy

Your free controller triggers are w*nk. **Confused_Dude**

That's one opinion – but Rockstar North rang us for 150 more.

PlayStation Network send your messages to PSM3uk



We've got mail Look how many emails we got from just one man. Take a break, eh, fella?

Much as it pains us, we can't really argue. *Denied Ops* looks remarkably poor, and you all seem to agree. Let's hope Pivotal go back to the series' squad shooter roots next time round.

Race war

I read your review of *NFS ProStreet* and thought that you were being a little harsh. You referred to *NFS Most Wanted* and spoke of *ProStreet*'s lack of cop chases and illegal night racing. You said (and rightly so) that *ProStreet* hasn't got any of these features. That's because *ProStreet* isn't attempting to be the updated and improved *Most Wanted* or *Carbon*, it's trying to be a totally different type of driving game. There is a clear gap between the styles of *NFS Carbon* and any *Gran Turismo* game.

This is because *ProStreet* isnt trying to be like its predecessors. I think that *ProStreet* in trying to slip slowly into the shadows of the likes of *Gran Turismo*. I think it's harsh to knock *ProStreet* because of what its trying to do – *GT* doesn't get frowned upon because of its lack of illegal street racing or the lack of cop chases. Why? Because its not expected from *Gran Turismo*. *GT* is known for its solid track racing and quality graphics and this is all *ProStreet* is trying to do. It's not that the days of underground racing in heavily over-pimped cars is over, I just feel that EA may go in two directions and carry on with the *ProStreet* series while still making its regular street racing games.

I'll admit that *ProStreet* is far from perfect, but if you look at it in the right light you'll see that its far from being a failure too. All it needs is a little bit of time and dedication to tie up all the loose ends, and I think it'll be an awesome game.

Joe Harrison, email

Don't get us wrong. We applaud EA for breaking away from the played-out, blinged-up street racing scene portrayed by *Juiced 2* and moving into the higher end, *GT*-racing, sector. But we felt the changes may irk die-hard fans, and acknowledged thus.

Sounding off

Interesting article on sound in games, but basically flawed. PS3 doesn't output 7.1 surround through the optical output you need to use HDMI and a suitable receiver. This is clearly stated in the PS3 manual. The Onkyo TX-SR505E which you mention as a suitable receiver is *unsuitable* as it only passes through the HDMI signal, it doesn't process it. The lowest spec Onkyo you can use for 7.1 is the TX-SR605. Let's hope nobody has rushed out and bought a lot of expensive kit after your poorly researched advice.

Dave Leicester, email

We beg your pardon – there seems to have been some sort of error on the part of our writer. As punishment we taped headphones to his ears and played Basshunter at full blast until his head exploded. That'll teach him.

Going postal

So will you be reviewing *Haze* next issue? I heard it's been pushed back to late '08 from a frankly untrustworthy

'Best' of the Blog

Visit PSM3MAG.COM and have your say

"We are pathetic nerds who will never get girlfriends, ever."

Posted by: bobsickle

"I received a card from a girl today. Sadly, it was a playing card I bought off eBay."

Posted by: Scotch Expert

'Best' of the Rest

The guys discuss the plastic Sixaxis triggers we gave away last issue. **FLStyle** says: "The triggers have improved my experience on *Tekken: Dark Resurrection* online tenfold." Glad to be of service. **Iwill** isn't so happy with them, however. "They don't look very classy, do they?"

Blog We post every day. Mostly. Go to psm3mag.com for more.

Car trouble We did appreciate ProStreet's new direction, but it still isn't *that* great.

with waiting for a game to start.
I can't access the game saves on your disc.
Jamie, email

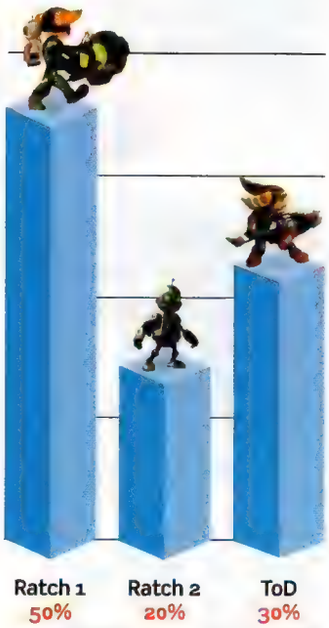
Stick side B of the DVD in your PC. Locate saves. Put saves on USB memory stick. Put stick in PS3. Voila.

Your Space

Poll Position

We ask. You answer

This Month Best *Ratchet: 1, 2* or *Tools Of Destruction?*



Next Month Best *Conflict: Desert Storm, Vietnam or Denied Ops?*

MySpace Cast your vote by emailing psm3@futurenet.co.uk

source. The more this keeps getting delayed, the less interested I am in it, paticularly with it looking like it's coming out after *MGS4* and *Killzone 2*. I am beginning to think that Free Radical have lost the passion with this game and just want to make *TS4* and their secret Lucasarts project.

James Sweetman, email

We *should* be reviewing it within the next two issues – Ubisoft have been promising us review code for ages, but to no avail. Apparently, a lot's changed so we remain cautious, but optimistic. Oh, and James, we can't keep up with your emails. Over the last few weeks he's sent us about *40*. It's not that we don't like your letters, we just find it impossible to read them all.

Ultimate warriors

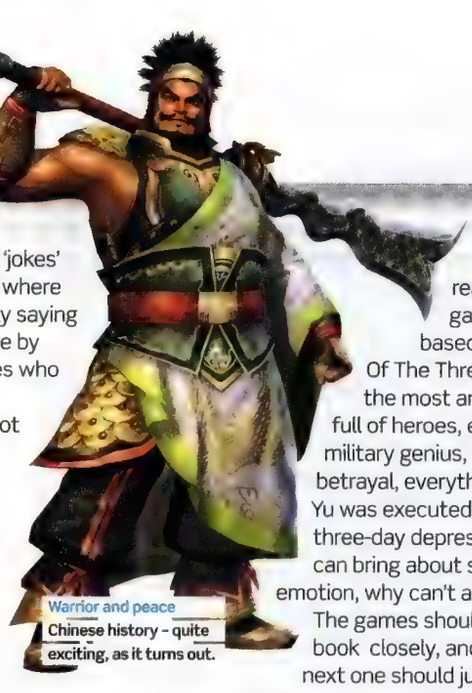
Although there are many things I just love about PSM3, you lose me totally with comments like "*DMC* thinks you're a girl for expecting fair treatment". Because if *DMC* did think I was a girl, *DMC* would be right. And I *do* expect fair treatment – not from a game, though, but from you.

I am sure you have done your research and you know who your readers are, but you seem perfectly able to refrain from racist remarks even though the mass of your readers most likely are white. So why is it that when you boys write for other boys, you suddenly think its fun and OK to use condescending 'jokes' about females, where you are basically saying that females are by nature creatures who can't stand a challenge. It's not funny. It tells every girl who picks up your magazine that she's not welcome and she should spend her money elsewhere. That games are not for her.

I've been playing since I was in pigtails and Atari was the shit. I would totally own most of you in *Warhawk*, and I probably will later tonight. I'm crazy about PS3.

Lex Mea, email

Oops – apologies, Lex, we're honestly not trying to marginalise anyone. All are welcome in the church of PSM3. As for owning us at *Warhawk*, though, you've got another think coming. We'll see you on the battlefield.



Warrior and peace Chinese history – quite exciting, as it turns out.

Ultimate warriors

I am a *Dynasty Warriors* fan, and always have been. I bought *2,3,4,5* and a couple of *Extreme Legends*, *Empires*, *Kessen 2* and both *DW Tactics* games. I will probably buy *DW6* too, but the fact is, the series needs to change.

I have twice read the book the games are loosely based on, Romance Of The Three Kingdoms. Its the most amazing story, full of heroes, epic battles, military genius, love, hate, betrayal, everything. When Guan Yu was executed I went into a three-day depression. If a book can bring about so much emotion, why can't a game? It can.

The games should follow the book closely, and I think the next one should just be about the three brothers, Lui Bei, Guan Yu and Zhang Fei and their quest to unite China. Get rid of the hundred other needless characters.

Massive battles could be planned first, laying traps and ambushes, scouting land and positioning where troops are deployed. Then you start the battles as one of the tiger generals based on the actions they took in the book. Zhang Fei pretended to get drunk to slaughter an army – he could fight with powerful brute strength. Guan Yu could rode through an entire army to behead a general – imagine doing that.

After the battles are won, Lui Bei, being more leader than warrior, can walk around villages meeting people, recruiting troops, planning the next move and so on. The story would of course have beautiful cut-scenes,

Tech Ken

Live from his retirement home, ex-Sony guru Ken Kutaragi answers your tech questions

Dear Ken

I have one router with a PC connected and my PS3. My stepson connects also and sometimes a friend does. This was all OK for a while, but now my stepson and friend get Type 3 NATs whilst mine has remained Type 2. This is causing problems for them, but not me. How can I sort this out? We're all wired connection; no wireless stuff going on.

Azz Wallis, email

"Alreet, son. The NAT type is determined by the strength of your connection, and if more and more people are connecting through the same ISP account, the connection gets, naturally, weaker. Sounds like you're all using too much bandwidth at once. Either get a better ISP (as many MB's as possible), otherwise I reckon yer 'reet cooked."

Dear Ken

You said in issue 94 that you could choose your own PS3 avatar from your pictures, but the instructions were a bit vague...

James Sweetman, email

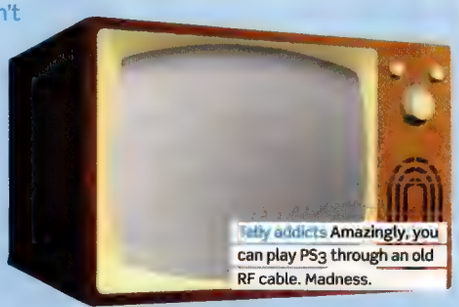
"Sweetman, eh? Perhaps you should mail more often... you can't set your online avatar from your pictures, only your PS3's user account. Anyway, to do it, simply press △ on the username whose avatar you want to change, then click on the image to select one from yer HDD. Easy."

Dear Ken

Can I know whether a Toshiba colour TV (not plasma or LCD) is compatible with PS3? I was told that PS3 can only be played with a plasma or LCD television.

Norman Teng, email

"Not true, son. You can play your PS3 through any telly with a SCART port or, if your TV is particularly old, an RF connection. If you want an RF lead, you'll have to look on eBay or on specialist tech sites. Sony no longer produce them new. So you don't need HD to play your PS3. Humbug?"



Telly addicts Amazingly, you can play PS3 through an old RF cable. Madness.

@ Email us Got a question? Email it to psm3@futurenet.co.uk. Subject 'Ken'.

"The more *Haze* is delayed, the less interested I am in it."
James Sweetman email

conveying all the love, hate and romance in the game, until Guan Yu's betrayal and death resulting in the death of all brothers. A tearful end. Wouldn't that be great?
Steven Sayers, email

We agree – if Koei dropped the same gameplay they've been using for years, this amazing tale could be told in a more exciting way. Way to ruin the end of the book, though. Cheers, Stephen.

License to kill

I was playing the barely changed Master League on *PES 2008* and I had a thought. Why don't Konami join up with another company to create a much better ML or career mode? Now I'm not talking about EA, but Codemasters. Think about it – Konami develop the playing side (bringing back *PES6* editing and getting rid of that unbearable lag), and Codemasters work on the management side (i.e. stadium development, transfers, offers from other clubs to manage them instead etc.) Also Codemasters have the lower league license with *LMA* (yes I know *FIFA* has them as well plus the Premiership, but *PES* plays waaaaaay better). Surely the power of Blu-ray and PS3 could cope with all this data. I know that joint ventures are rare (and it's too late for it to happen for *PES 2009*), but the potential this joining of forces against the mass-produced, soulless, sequel-churning EA games can't and shouldn't, be overlooked. *PES* is almost perfect regarding the playing of the beautiful game, but it's the off the pitch action that's weak. A union with Codemasters could rectify that and end the challenge of *FIFA*.
Steven Potts, email

The chances of this ever happening are so slim, it's barely worth thinking about. But it is a good idea, and we like the concept of publishers joining forces to strengthen existing franchises.

Soccer to me **Konami teaming up with other devs to improve *PES*? Yeah, *right*...**

UK myspace – a place for friends
Go to www.myspace.com/psm3 and join us

PSM3's Top Eight
MySpace readers who rock our world

Daniel Detonate
ABOUT HIM
"I look like Sid from Skins."
ABOUT HIM
"This is Katherine doing Daniel's profile. He knows everyone's timetables, he always knows how to make us laugh. We always have a right laugh in English."
CURRENTLY PLAYING
Pro Evo 2008
WHY WE MADE HIM TOP 8
Because he let a girl fill in his profile info. We'd never do that – we don't know any girls. Perhaps they'll get married. Aw, sweet.

James
ABOUT HIM
"One question: how did you find me and why should I be your friend? Er, that's two questions."
MUSIC
"Mostly indie rock, DJs and hip-hop, like Turbowolf, Klaxons, DJ Format, Jurassic 5, Arctic Monkeys, The Cooper Temple Clause, Powderfinger, The Hives."
CURRENTLY PLAYING
Rock Band
WHY WE MADE HIM TOP 8
Because there's a video on his MySpace profile of a friend of his falling off a bicycle. We're suckers for people falling off bicycles.

Amy
ABOUT HER
"I like games (PS2, PSP) and old-school cartoons like Thundercats and, oh, the Mighty Boosh."
WOULD LIKE TO MEET
"Bjork, Bill Bailey, Julian Barratt and Noel Fielding, Chris Cunningham, Simon Pegg."
CURRENTLY PLAYING
Devil May Cry 4
WHY WE MADE HER TOP 8
Because her page is covered in lovely drawings, and because her 'would like to meet' list is pretty much identical to ours.

James
INTERESTS
"Carlsberg, Carlsberg Export, double vodka and Red Bull."
ABOUT HIM
"I'm into the things most blokes are into: drinking, football, fatty foods, music and boobies. Most of the time I'm at work or my local, but sometimes I go to clubs and make an arse of myself."
CURRENTLY PLAYING
Guitar Hero 3
WHY WE MADE HIM TOP 8
Because of his eternal love for all things booze-related. And we also have a penchant for making arses of ourselves in clubs.

Phil Glover
ABOUT HIM
"You can't spell 'Phil Glover' without 'love'!"
TRAVEL
"Really enjoyed the backpacking I did back in the day – especially Budapest, Venice & Mount Rigi (Swiss) from my big trip, and then Oslo and Iceland from my Scandinavian trips."
CURRENTLY PLAYING
Burnout Paradise
WHY WE MADE HIM TOP 8
Because he's a well-travelled man of the world, and also because his profile has the Knight Rider theme tune on it. Awesome.

Afterburn
ABOUT HIM
"My name's Scott. I like to think of myself as laid-back and a loyal friend."
WOULD LIKE TO MEET
"My Chemical Romance because they're awesome, George Bush so I can slap him, and Carmen Electra, for obvious reasons."
CURRENTLY PLAYING
Heavenly Sword
WHY WE MADE HIM TOP 8
Because the Tenacious D video on his profile made us laugh, and distracted us briefly from filling in this absolutely massive page.

Shalashaska
ABOUT HIM
"I'm Ryan, 19 going on 19. I live in Denton, I play bass guitar, I have a fiance and I love music."
INTERESTS
"I like listening to music, playing *Guitar Hero 3*, drinking Magners and watching Skins. I want to meet Ryan Payton from Kojima Productions and Slash."
CURRENTLY PLAYING
Call Of Duty 4, Devil May Cry 4
WHY WE MADE HIM TOP 8
We like Magners too, especially on a hot summer's day. Oh, and we've met Ryan Payton, and he seemed like a nice enough bloke.

¡Calum!
ABOUT HIM
"I like pineapples and badgers. I wish I was a badger. I like music, it's good and funky."
INTERESTS
"I sing, not well. I have a thing for retro words. Funky is one of them. I play sports, a lot."
CURRENTLY PLAYING
Pro Evo 2008
WHY WE MADE HIM TOP 8
We're all about bringing back retro words too. We regularly say 'far out', although Dave usually deletes it from our reviews. :-(

MySpace Want to make our Top Eight? Go to www.myspace.com/psm3 and send us a friend request. We'll welcome your beloved photogenic

You Wha?

I want to connect my PS3 to the Internet but I only have dial-up.
Pauline Chapman, email

Sorry, you can't. Get broadband – it's really cheap these days. Are PS3 games still region-locked?

C Fillery, email
Some are, but mostly no, they aren't. Holy crap! What an ending for *DMC4*!

It sure has left me drooling for the next game in the series.
Anto, MySpace

It's nice you're excited, but don't drool over your PS3 or it might well explode. Completed *DMC4* today – OMG, epicness at its full.
Daniel, MySpace

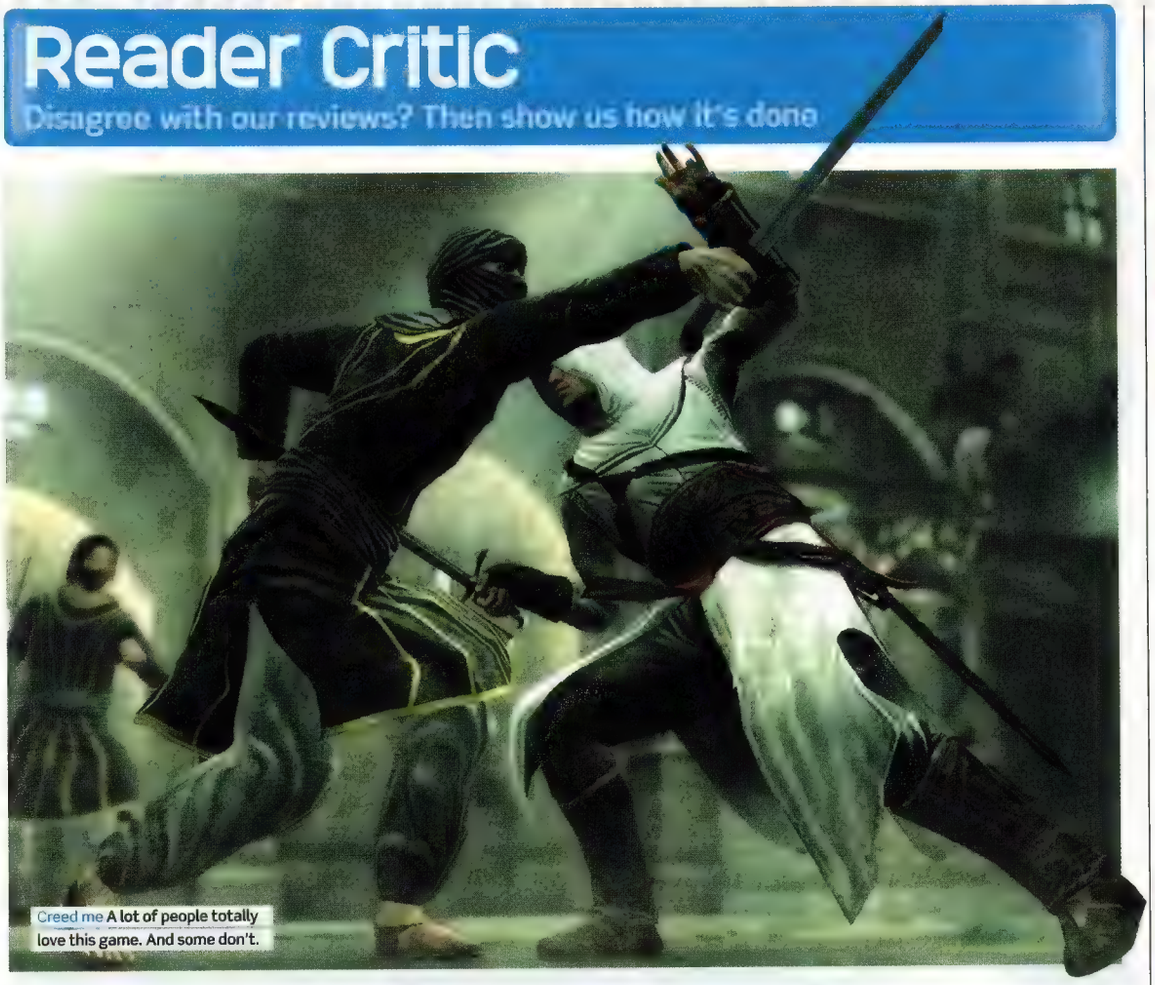
Another one? Crikey, we're surprised anyone made it past the second fight with Dante. Unless you were all playing it on easy.

I love you, PSM3.
mattosBORNe ,

MySpace
Aaaah, that's nice. Comments like that almost make this column seem worth it.

Reader Critic

Disagree with our reviews? Then show us how it's done



Creed me A lot of people totally love this game. And some don't.

Assassin's Creed

It's a triumph of art direction and atmosphere, but *that* ending...

Reader Profile

Name Gary Walker
Location Lancaster
Fave games Final Fantasy, Metal Gear Solid, Guitar Hero, Skate
About me Not much to tell really. I'm 21, slumming it at Argos until I figure out what to do with my life, would quite like to either be an actor or work somewhere in the games business and I would describe myself as a massive geek.

Assassin's Creed raises the bar for the current generation, and provides an enthralling, if not entirely fulfilling story. One of the most intriguing things about *Assassin's Creed* is its story. In a slightly leftfield move, a game in which you play as an assassin during the Crusades is in fact set in the near future.

We are transported to 1191 AD. Your character is Altair, a master assassin. A brash outspoken man, he incurs the wrath of the leader of the assassins, Al-Mualim, who demotes him to the lowest level of assassin, telling him he must re-earn his title and status by murdering nine key figures of unrest in the Holy Land. After gleaning as much information as you need to carry out your hit, Altair is given permission to take out his target – and it's here that the design really starts to shine.

You spend a fair amount of time before each kill taking in the lay of the land and planning an escape route, as well as waiting for the opportune moment to strike, when the target is at his most vulnerable. As fun as sticking a knife into an evil doctor's neck is, what makes *Assassin's Creed* stand out is its looks and the way the art direction feeds into the gameplay. Each of the three cities you'll explore, as well as the surrounding kingdom, have been beautifully created, and can make you gasp for breath when viewed for the first time.

The repetitive nature of the gameplay and the hide in the shadows style isn't going to cater to everyone's tastes, however, and the ending is disappointing, offering no closure. But rest assured, this is a landmark game for the current generation of consoles. **Gary Walker**

Reader Verdict

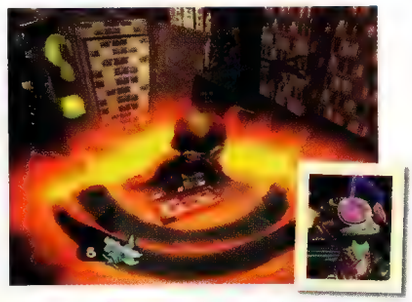
This will hopefully be remembered as one of 2007's best games.

92

@ Email us Subject 'Critic' to psm3@futurenet.co.uk. Or post a review to the usual address.

Psychonauts

Humour, puzzles, milkmen - *'nauts* had it all



This is a unique game because it mixes classic platforming with adventure elements. It was developed by the same people who made classic PC point-and-clickers like *Day Of The Tentacle* and features similar characters and puzzles. It's also really, really funny, and you will grow to genuinely love the characters. The game's levels are set inside the minds of crazy people, including an insane milkman. You see their thoughts and fears, and can view slideshows of their memories. It's so clever

It's a shame the frame-rate is so bad, because it stunts the flow of an otherwise terrific platformer. The other problem is that there are too many collectibles and you're obliged to collect most of them to progress. But this really is a modern classic. **Ray Parker**

97

OutRun 2006

Coast 2 Coast, the king of arcade racers

It's amazing how such a simple game can be so addictive. The concept couldn't be more basic – drive a car really fast across a series of tracks, clearing checkpoints before the timer runs out. But it's because of the handling that it's so much fun to play. The game may feature real Ferraris, but it's anything but realistic. To keep your speed up as you turn corners you have to powerslide. But forget everything you know about powersliding in games because *OutRun* redefines it. The skids are so insane, your car almost turns completely horizontal as you career around the game's massive tracks dodging traffic and soaking up the atmospheric views. And the music is amazing as well. It's a thrill for the senses and the excitement of clearing a checkpoint on the hard route the second the timer hits zero is unmatched. Awesome, all told. **Sid Taylor**

89

"I bought *Dynasty Warriors 2, 3, 4, 5, Empires...*"
Steven Sayers email

Burnout Paradise
Tiny problems in an otherwise great game

I've just spent the afternoon playing this and all I can say is "Wow!" It's easily the best of the series with its stunning visuals and free-roaming environment. However, the game does have some small problems, like the mini-map – it takes forever to get used too. It's also rather easy. The only difficulty in most races is the evil mini-map. The multi-player is awesome though, and really easy to get into. It's fun racing around the city with your mates and beating their drift and crash scores.

You will blaze through the game in two or three days, though. And that's what spoils this game – the little things. After doing all of the main races you'll get bored of online mode quite quickly too. You cant even do Marked Man online, which sucks. **Ash Devereux-Lewis**

90

PSM3 You were so right!

"This series used to be great. What happened? It's so incredibly lame."
Paul Marling, email

Conflict: Denied Ops

We said "A disastrous entry for a well-regarded franchise."
PSM98 | David Cook | 50%

"Forget *CoD4* for a minute and you can see that this ain't really that bad."
Jason Miller, email

PSM3 You were so wrong!

YouTube The Video Zone
Out there gamer vids from the cyberdepths

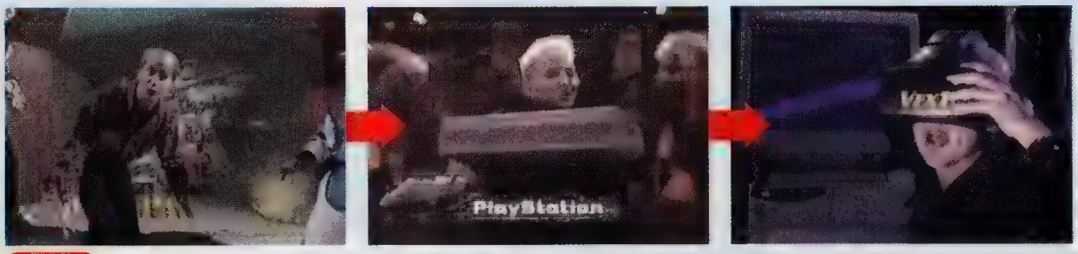
Ridge Racer Type 4 intro by marciorossi

AWESOME OK, so it's the intro from the classic PSone racer, but *what* an intro. Attention, developers; *this* is how you introduce a game. Slick, sexy, exciting... one of the best opening CGs *ever*. http://tinyurl.com/26xqst

PS3 powerhouse by barryminor2

TECHY Some bloke has used IBM ray-tracing technology and the combined power of three PS3s to render a model of a car that's 75 times more complex than those used in games today. http://tinyurl.com/256xhm

Bad Influence at ECTS 1994 by 4468



RETRO After Andy Crane gets mauled by Raiden from *Mortal Kombat*, Violet Berlin oohs and aahs over the original PlayStation and foolishly explains that virtual reality is 'the future'. Hah. http://tinyurl.com/2976s7

Simon Amstell on GamesMaster by badlydrawnguy

ODD More retro TV, this time from GamesMaster circa 1993. And who's that cocky little chap? Why, it's hilarious Buzzcocks presenter/comedian Simon Amstell. And he's *exactly* the same. http://tinyurl.com/2fllr5

@ Created your own brilliant fan vid? Or just found a game you want to share? Email joerg@futurenet.co.uk and tell us all about it.

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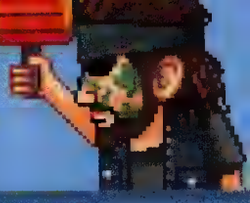
"Entire games of little games"

Illustration © Army Of Trolls



THE BEST 36 MINIGAMES EVER!

The best – and worst – games-in-games around...

Even during PSone's life, we stopped batting our eyelids if games contained other, smaller games within them. It didn't even seem odd if whole games were made up of dozens of little ones - think *Bishi Bashi Special* or *Incredible Crisis*. Nowadays we use minigame mechanisms to open doors, enact fancy stealth kills, slaughter bosses or open chests. Minigames are everywhere, be it shoving boulders in *Conan*, coercing peasants in *Oblivion* or doing anything at all in *Thrillville* or *Jackass*.

Five years from now, we'd not be surprised to see Sony Japan release *Ultimate Life Sim* for PS3, where you've got to tap a button sequence in time with the music in order to open a tin of pear halves for breakfast or starve. Don't scoff, it'll shift more units than The Bible, without a doubt. And so, we offer you a diverse glimpse of some of the maddest, baddest or just best minigames that have cropped up on PS2 during its lifespan...

Mercenaries

From *Resident Evil 4*
Unlock Finish the game
Mini-rating 10/10
Minigames don't get much bigger than this hectic, beautifully stressful, arena-based set of survival challenges. The essence of the combat in easy-to-swallow pill form.

Sexy Time

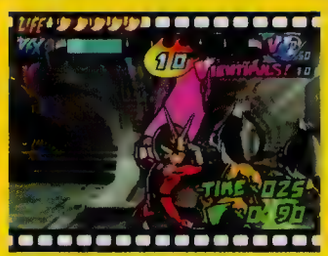
From *God Of War 2*
Unlock Hidden in first stage
Mini-rating 6/10
Here, Kratos 'entertains' buxom nymphs at the local spa. You don't see much, for better or worse, but we suppose a god has to get what he can when he's on the move so often.

Ballz Out

From *The Guy Game*
Unlock There from the start
Mini-rating 7/10
This is, bluntly, a quiz about women getting their melons out. Oddly has ball-based minigames, including this: use your big ball to hit more little balls out the arena than your rival.

Anaconda

From *TimeSplitters 2*
Unlock Find in the first stage
Mini-rating 6/10
A homage to thumb-defiling phone classic *Snake*. It's far from sparkly when on your own, but throw a second player into the mix, and it becomes damned competitive, damned fast.

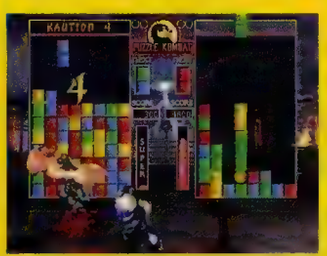


36 Chambers

From *Viewtiful Joe 2*
Unlock Appears in main game
Mini-rating 7/10
The 36 Chambers, like their kung fu namesake, are a set of gruelling trials, designed to push your ability to the limit. Short and sweet enough to persuade you to test your mettle.

Puzzle Kombat

From *Mortal Kombat: Deception*
Unlock Not needed
Mini-rating 6/10
Chess? A *Mario Kart* clone? Hilariously bad RPG off-cuts? We loved it when *Mortal Kombat* started going senile and let its hair down. A bit like *Puzzle Fighter* copycat, *Puzzle Kombat*.



Puyo Pop

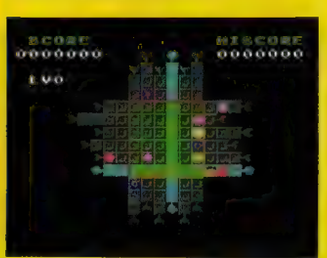
From *Sega Superstars*
Unlock Not needed
Mini-rating 8/10
The *Puyo Pop* game managed to distract you from feeling as daft as you looked. An EyeToy game, using your arms, you'd control spills of Puyo Pop berries, waving about like a karate alarm clock.

Reckless Cyclist

From *Mr Moskeeto* | **Unlock** Rotate right stick 30 times at title screen | **Mini-rating** 6/10
Some minigames are just so pointless you've no choice but to give them a whirl. Atop a great pillar of rock two cyclists charge, attempting to bash the other off the edge. And, um, that's it.

Kunitoris

From *Forbidden Siren 2*
Unlock Obtain file #79
Mini-rating 5/10
Not quite as titillating as dyslexics might have hoped – this misleadingly-titled game is a bizarre block-sliding puzzler. And, no, we've not much idea what's going on, either.



Wee Hand
From *Jackass*
Unlock Play through game
Mini-rating 8/10
Remember that scene in Aliens? With the knife and Bishop's bionic reflexes? Do it on poor Wee Man's hand. Time your stabs as the knife goes back and forth across his knuckles... ouch.

Monkey Target
From *Super Monkey Ball Deluxe*
Unlock Not needed
Mini-rating 9/10
None of *SMB*'s multi-player modes are as compulsive, intuitive and long-lasting as the glider-based Monkey Target. Monkey Bowl does come a very close second, though.

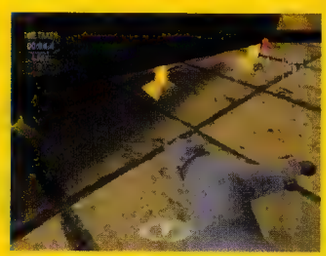
Darts
From *Pool Paradise*
Unlock Buy from shop
Mini-rating 9/10
Ah, darts. Not something you'd expect from a pool game on a tropical island, but it's brilliant, and apes the analogue-stick goodness of the pool itself. Murderously competitive.

Innocent Sin
From *Persona 3*
Unlock Reach April 29, in-game
Mini-rating 1/10
Persona 3 does RPGing much differently to most. Innocent Sin is a MMORPG that you can spend your free time playing. But you don't actually play it as much as explore character relationships.

"Time trials involving a stuffed cat on wheels – realistic handling never comes up"

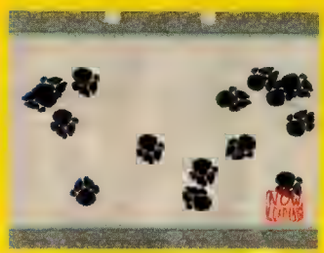
Chat-up Lines
From *Leisure Suit Larry*
Unlock Not needed
Mini-rating 6/10
Conversations with girls in *Larry* are handled by guiding a sperm (hoo hoo!) through a river of choices, each one changing the strength and direction of your chat-up lines in real-time.

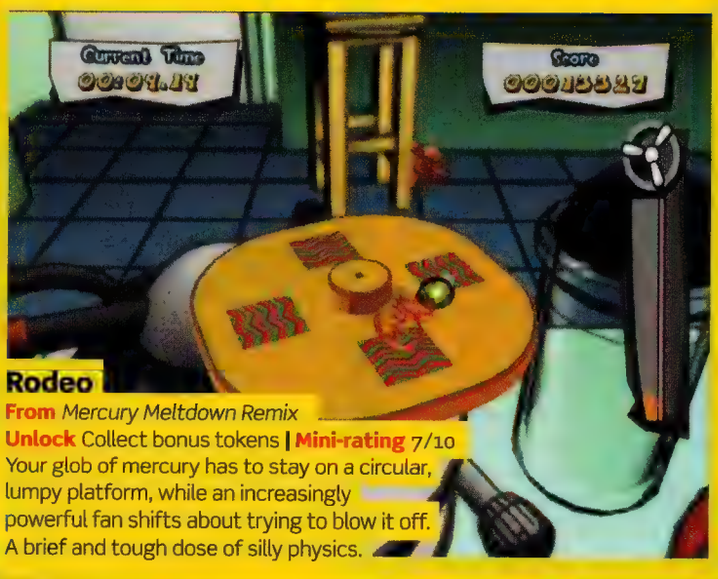
Cat Racing
From *'Splitters: Future Perfect*
Unlock Not needed
Mini-rating 6/10
If you're going to have a set of time-trial challenges involving a stuffed cat on wheels, the question of realistic handling must never come up. Just as well, given how badly they steer.



Ragdoll Olympics
From *Flatout 2*
Unlock Not needed
Mini-rating 8/10
Take crash test dumbasses for a ride, in a series of sporting events – basketball, poker, high jump, curling, and more – that use the driver launched from a crashed car as your 'athlete'.

Paw Prints
From *Okami*
Unlock Not needed
Mini-rating 5/10
These button-bashing minigames are hardly clever. But their placement is – they offer some distraction during loading screens, and even some tokens of reward if you put the effort in.





Rodeo
From *Mercury Meltdown Remix*
Unlock Collect bonus tokens | **Mini-rating** 7/10
Your glob of mercury has to stay on a circular, lumpy platform, while an increasingly powerful fan shifts about trying to blow it off. A brief and tough dose of silly physics.

Jerking Off

From *Torrente 3: The Protector*
Unlock Not needed
Mini-rating 0/10
How could we fail to mention this, the most awful minigame ever made? Bringing a sweaty Spanish cop to climax in a toilet cubicle in a strip club in Madrid... we've never felt so dirty, or used.

Bandito Chinchilla

From *Thrillville: Off the Rails*
Unlock Not needed
Mini-rating 7/10
Thrillville contains dozens of minigame homages to classic arcade genres. Its tribute to the side-scrolling scrapper? A dusty Mexican stand-off, filled with pummelled pooches. Quite.

The Peeing Game

From *A Dog's Life*
Unlock Not needed
Mini-rating 6/10
Forget capture the flag. There's only one way to establish your territory in the real world: with jets of hot yellow *slosh*. Sony's wonderful dog sim has you peeing over the outlines of disputed areas in order to claim them and prove your superiority over the locals.

"Bringing a sweaty cop to climax in a toilet cubicle in a strip club in Madrid... just awful"

Gummi Shooting

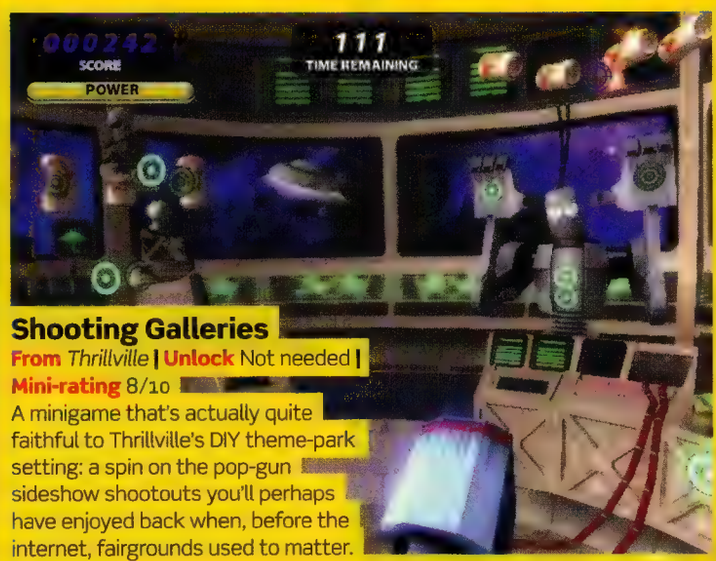
From *Kingdom Hearts II*
Unlock Part of the game
Mini-rating 9/10
KHII's Gummi Ship sections are ace – blazing, intense, pretty, and rich with rewards to find. You only need complete minimal levels to travel to new kingdoms, but you'll be back for more.

Sex, Sex, Sex

From *7 Sins*
Unlock Tsk. Need you ask?
Mini-rating 3/10
Getting lucky with one of *7 Sins*' hilariously ugly mannequin skanks is a process that involves tracing a lady's outline with the analogue stick – as accurately as possible. Sex, eh?

One Man Band

From *Steambot Chronicles*
Unlock Not needed
Mini-rating 7/10
Choose an instrument – Harmonica? Guitar? Trumpet? Piano? – and start belting out a tune on the street corner, in a typical rhythm-action manner. The music is often beautiful.



Shooting Galleries

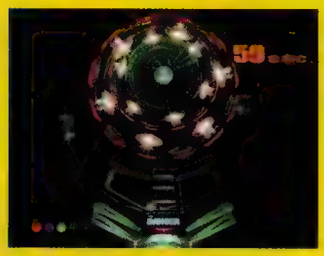
From *Thrillville* | **Unlock** Not needed |
Mini-rating 8/10
A minigame that's actually quite faithful to Thrillville's DIY theme-park setting: a spin on the pop-gun sideshow shootouts you'll perhaps have enjoyed back when, before the internet, fairgrounds used to matter.

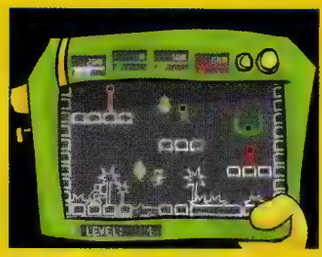
Seduction

From *Fahrenheit*
Unlock Not needed
Mini-rating 6/10
A bit like *Guitar Hero* – except success yields the 'ol rumpo, not calloused forefingers. Lukas can get his ex into the sack for one last canoodle, if he plucks the guitar strings well enough.

Starmine
From *Fantavision*
Unlock Collect tokens
Mini-rating 6/10
Fantasvision turned fireworks into a dazzling puzzle. The best bit? Starmine. Every firework is of the same colour, allowing you to link up insane, screen-popping combos of glittering explosives.

3D Insanity
From *Flipnic*
Unlock Side missions
Mini-rating 7/10
A gaggle of eye-popping mini-missions that take your flippers into 3D. Navigate tunnels pocked with bouncers, or hit selections of morphing shapes that float in the middle of space.



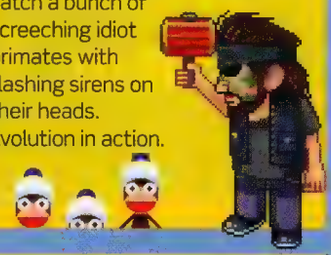


PDA Game
From *Alien Hominid*
Unlock Not needed
Mini-rating 8/10
A sweet, sweet extra: a platforming bonanza with stylishly scrawled looks, hundreds of levels, four-player support and even a stage editing option. Marvellous.

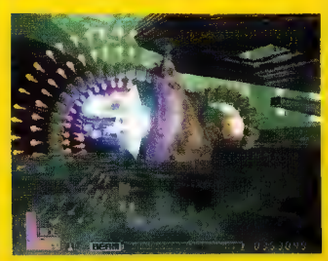
Quark Vid-comics
From *Ratchet & Clank 3*
Unlock Play through game
Mini-rating 8/10
Ratchet often packs the slickest minigames in the business, and these Vid-Comics took the blundering Captain Quark to a whole new universe: 2D platforming. Brilliant stuff.

Heart Attack
From *Outrun 2006*
Unlock Not needed
Mini-rating 8/10
Crammed with minigames that driving into an ever-changing test of skill. Dodge the traffic! Hit the traffic! Do maths! Take photos! And collect hearts to keep your lady love sweet. Aw.

Mesal Gear Solid
From *MGS3: Snake Eater*
Unlock Not needed
Mini-rating 10/10
A stealth-clash crossover that puts *Ape Escape*'s monkeys into Snake's world. The result? An irresistible but technical dash to catch a bunch of screeching idiot primates with flashing sirens on their heads. Evolution in action.



Ai Warfare
From *R-Type Final*
Unlock Not needed
Mini-rating 7/10
As well as being a horrendously dark (and bargain-priced) shooter, *R-Type Final* lets you take any of its 99 ships, kit it out, and let it loose in a turn-based, AI-driven sim battle.



Stealing
From *7 Sins*
Unlock Not needed
Mini-rating 0/10
You've managed to charm a woman into falling for you, so how do you repay her devotion? By stealing from her when she's not looking, of course. Maximum sexist scumbag points all round.

Chihuahua Races
From *God Hand*
Unlock Clear stage 2
Mini-rating 5/10
Bet on a set of garishly coloured and awesomely named ('Mikami's head'?) dogs, and watch them scuttle along a race track for cash and giggles. Even madder than the rest of the game.

Tower Climb
From *ATV Quad Power Racing 2*
Unlock Not needed
Mini-rating 8/10
Subtly coax your ATV to the top (or bottom) of a loopy tower constructed from ramps, bumps, banks, steps and jumps, as quickly as possible. We'd have played a whole game of this.

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PSM3 Reviews

Instant PlayStation justice

78 Lost

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"We don't quite know what Midway achieved by delaying this game"

Blacksite: Area 51 page 76

PSM3 review scoring system

0-29
Rubbish
An absolute stinker and an insult to gaming. The makers should be ashamed.

30-49
Poor
Why did they do that? Some simple playtesting could have worked wonders.

50-69
All right
Hey it works, and we can see what they were trying to do. And that's about it.

70-84
Good
Worth playing, especially if you're a fan of the genre. It just lacks that touch of greatness.

85-89
Superb
This is the sweet spot. If a game scores in this zone it's definitely worth your money.

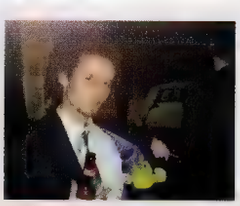
90+
Amazing
You must get this. Failure to do so would mean missing out on a real console classic.

PSM3 BUY IT
The Award
If you see this, then you should buy that game.

The Team

We know everything about games – just not much about anything else...

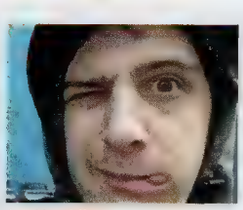
Daniel Dawkins
Specialist in Extreme sports, monochrome.
Playing *The Orange Box:* "To inject some colour into life."



Nathan Irvine
Specialist in Sports games, keeping reptiles in his pockets.
Playing *Dark Sector:* "The frogs help protect me from the evil."

Andy Kelly
Specialist in Role-playing games, moaning about the emo jokes
Playing *Condemned 2:* "We're all condemned in this cruel world."

David Cook
Specialist in Shooters, arty experiments with perspective.
Playing *Football Manager:* "Hoping art doesn't imitate life."



Jon Hamblin
Specialist in Action games, breaking cameras by gurning.
Playing *Lost:* "A game at least four times uglier than this face."

Andy Hartup
Specialist in Shooters, not submitting proper 'comedy' pics.
Playing *Rainbow Six Vegas 2:* "Always bet on green... no, wait..."

Disagree with our reviews? Email your outraged rant to **psm3@futurenet.co.uk**

Pub Ubisoft | **Dev** Ubisoft
Price £50 | **Release** March 2
Multi-player 1-16

ON THE DISC
Watch Vegas 2 in hi-def on this month's disc

Rainbow Six Vegas 2

Clancy's boys just outstay their welcome in Sin city

KNOW IT NOW

- Fast and brutal tactical combat? ✓
- Serious men doing serious killing? ✓
- A new levelling-up system? ✓
- A significant step on from the first game? ✗

They say a good gambler knows when their luck is about to turn. With that in mind, *Rainbow Six* should have cashed its chips and left Vegas after the first game. Logan Keller and his special ops squad visited Dante's Casino, Fremont Street, Vertigo Spire and even the Nevada (Hoover) dam during the first game, giving us a comprehensive tour of Sin City. So why go back there?

This isn't Vegas

It leaves new boy, Bishop (your playable character) in a bit of a bind. As this game is part prequel, part sequel, part concurrent game, you're never visiting the same parts of the city as you did in the first outing. And this is where *Vegas 2*'s first problem rears its ugly head. Until the fifth level – and these are big levels – you never get within 50 feet of a casino. Not a whiff of neon. Not a whisper of coins rattling through slot machines. Just endless treks through generic warehouses and building sites. Sure, they're nice-looking warehouses and building sites, but they could be anywhere in the world.

This might seem like an odd criticism, but if you're buying a game called *Rainbow Six Vegas 2*, you'd expect a few of the famous landmarks to make it into the final product. Imagine picking up the next *The Getaway* and finding out you'd be spending the first five or so hours cruising around a housing estate in Staines handcuffing ASBOs before you got within spotting distance of Big Ben or Leicester Square.

It's a shame the developer couldn't leave Las Vegas, because the actual combat is on a par with the mighty *Call Of Duty 4*. In fact, when it comes to claustrophobic indoor gunplay, *Vegas 2* actually trumps *CoD4* thanks to its excellent cover mechanics. Hit L1 and Bishop pushes his back to the nearest piece of cover. The camera zooms out to third-person, leaving you with a view of what's ahead and a number of options at your disposal. You can issue orders to your squad, let off a volley of blind-fire to kill off any terrorist dumb enough to rush you, or you can snap out and take a precision shot before returning to cover. There are few moments in gaming more satisfying than popping out from behind a door and pulling

"In the first five levels, you don't get *near* a casino"

Viva Las Vegas

Top tips for staying alive in Las Vegas

Don't hate your mates Your buds have eagle eyes, and can hollow out a $100 gambling chip from 50 meters with a Desert Eagle.

Get the right tools for the mission There are outfitting crates dotted around every level, so you can change your kit regularly.

Cover your ass If it's a flat surface, you can hide behind it and return fire. Just be mindful of the fact that, like in *CoD4*, bullets can penetrate flimsy cover.

off a clinical headshot on one of Vegas' many bad guys.

The combat system served the original game well, yet there have been subtle, but notable changes since. Mercifully, teammate AI has been considerably beefed up. Your buddies Michaels and Jung are now smart enough to realise that taking a shortcut through a room full of terrorists isn't the smartest way to get from A to B – a massive issue we had with the original. Even more impressively, they'll move to their destination by creeping from cover to cover, watching each other's backs as they go, so there's less chance of either ending up stranded in the middle of a room sucking up enemy bullets. It's the most intelligent squad behaviour we've seen, and although this smart programming is somewhat wasted on a couple of personality-devoid meat-heads in an semi-sequel, it can only be a good thing for the future of the franchise.

Stat bastard

In 15 hours of heated play we managed...

20 Marksmanship levels

57 Men set on fire

05 weapons still locked

03 Terrorist hunts

All alone

You certainly notice a change in the game when your buddies aren't around. One of the later levels has you stalking Alvarez, the terrorist honcho, through (yawn) an industrial plant next to the Clark County airstrip

Having a riot In *Vegas 2* you'll be able to pick up and use riot shields as portable cover.

Art imitating life You crash into the Las Vegas convention centre in the middle of a Major League Game Tournament.

Rainbow Six Vegas 2

Your team has the most intelligent squad behaviour we've seen

Rules of engagement You can tell your teammates to return fire only, if stealth is required.

The shield Taking down shielded enemies is tricky. Aim for the tops of their heads.

just outside Vegas. The stage is set entirely at night too, so you're at the mercy of your night-vision, and in short it's a pig of a level to beat. Without its squad mechanics, *Rainbow Six* becomes a frustrating, run-of-the-mill shooter where you're constantly at risk of being shot in the back or picked off by a sniper before you reach the next checkpoint. Long before you finish your little lone-wolfing session, you'll be begging to hear Michaels whispering "Tango neutrilised" in your ear.

Smoke 'em: If you're pinned down, deploy smoke, whip out your thermal vision goggles and roll out.

Another, more noticeable change is the integration of *Rainbow Six*'s multi-player, RPG-lite mechanics to the single-player game. When you first play the game you're asked to create a custom character and kit them out with a variety of weapons and armours. Once you've custom-built your all-American hero, he (or indeed she) is your character throughout both the single and multi-player modes. This means that as you plough manfully through the main campaign, or the offline Terrorist Hunts, your character gains XP and levels up, unlocking new weapons, armours and clothing. On the plus side, this means that you don't have to spend a handful of deeply frustrating weeks online shaking off your noob status and levelling up your character to get the best kit.

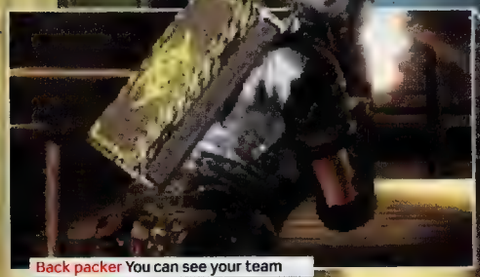
On the downside, this means that until you've completed the main game, your character won't have snagged enough experience to unlock the majority of the guns. So, if you're partial to the meatier assault rifles like the MTAR21 and the G3KA4, or the better sub-machine guns like the MAC11, you either have to pick them up from fallen enemies or keep on slotting terrorists until you've unlocked

Tactical map

License to kill

Everything you need to know about a typical terrorist encounter in *Rainbow Six Vegas 2*

On the level Level up and you'll have more weapons to kit yourself out with.



Back packer You can see your team mate's weapons on their backs. This bomb is from online's Team Extraction.

Healing good Inevitably, your teammates are going to get shot. If you don't heal them quickly, they die and it's Game Over.

them. Newcomers probably won't be too fazed by this, but long-time *Rainbow Six* players will feel a little aggrieved at having to spend hours with noticeably second-rate firearms.

Another slight twist to the RPG system is the introduction of ACES (Advanced Combat Enhancement & Specialisation). These three specialisat classes reflect the sort of player you are, and as you level each one up according to the way you play, they reward you in kind. So, if you're partial to picking off enemies from long range, or with headshots, you'll level up your Marksman skills quicker and unlock more sniper rifles and long-range assault weapons. Conversely, if you like to see the white of your foe's terrified eyes before making the kill, you'll advance your CQB specialisation and bag more shotguns. It works in theory, but can be annoying if you're looking to add specific weapons to your armoury that require you to play out of character.

Aside from these minor changes, and the ability to equip a riot shield, the single player campaign remains largely the same as the original. In fact, some of the similarities smack of out and out laziness. The terrorist sound-bites have been copied and pasted from the first game, and they were laughable to

Up the ranks

Each time you kill an enemy you'll get XP. Kill them in a specific way (headshots, etc) and you'll get points that level up your specialist classes.

begin with. Do AK-47 toting insurgents really have conversations like: grunt A - "Looks like we might have a situation", grunt B – "What kind of situation?", grunt A "The killing kind"? Similarly, we were rather hoping we wouldn't have to spend another ten or so hours of our life with Jung and Michaels, our squad mates from the original, because they bring new meaning to the word 'wooden', but sadly, they're major players in this sequel. They've even got some of the same god-awful lines.

All together now

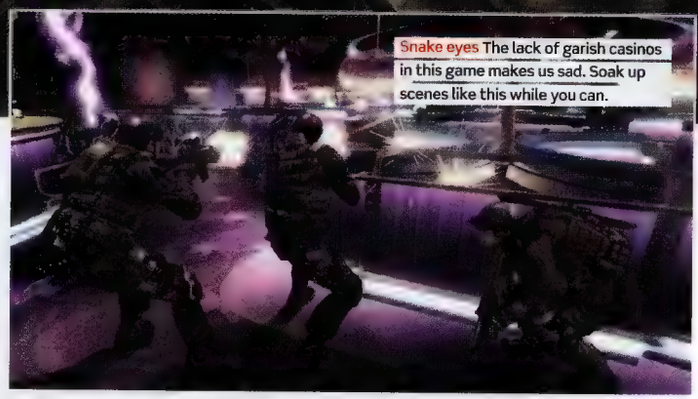
Still, they're marginally less irritating than certain members of the *Rainbow Six* online community. At least Jung doesn't accuse you of being a British fag if you steal his kill. Multi-player plays a massive part in this sequel, much like it did in the original

Rainbow Six Vegas 2

"Showcases the duller, more forgettable side of Sin City"

Break through Don't assume you're safe behind cover. Bullets can penetrate things like wood and cardboard.

Dangerous parking You'll spend the majority of *Vegas 2* shooting up motel car parks and warehouses like this one, so get used to it.



Snake eyes The lack of garish casinos in this game makes us sad. Soak up scenes like this while you can.

Vegas. There are two new online game modes, bringing the grand total up to twelve, and you'll have 13 maps to play them over. With the ability to level your character up now embedded in the single player game, expect multiplayer sessions to be more balanced, but infinitely more brutal and unforgiving than before because everyone will be toting the finest guns within weeks of the game's release.

Oddly, Ubisoft has taken the decision to reduce the number of players that can take part in online terrorist hunts to just two. In the last game, it was you and up to three buddies: now it's you, a mate, and two AI squad mates controlled by the host. This bizarre move seems like foolish pride on the part of the developer (yes, we know your new friendly AI is great, but do we have to take it into multi-player too?), and is the sort of thing that's bound to upset the hardcore Clancy-ites. And that includes us, by the way.

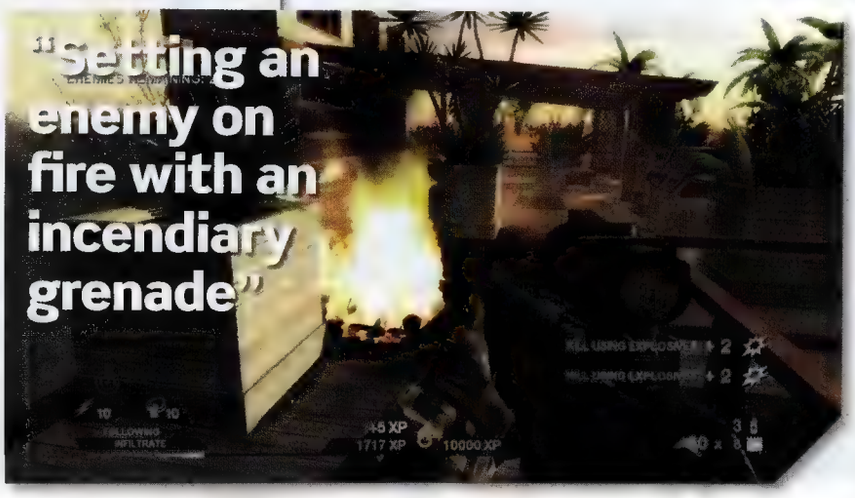
All in all, though, the *Rainbow Six* experience has improved. A bit. The idea of having the custom-character system working across the entire game is a solid one, and the improvement in team-mate behaviour makes the single-playe mode easier to digest. But as a sequel, *Vegas 2* fails to deliver. Ubisoft is asking big favours of the Clancy community by demanding half a ton for this glorified expansion pack, especially as this game showcases the duller, more forgettable sides of Sin City. So like we said, it's time for *Rainbow Six* to step away from the craps table and the roulette wheel while it still has the Kevlar vest on its back.

Andy Hartup

The spying game

You can check out what's behind a door before you enter a room by deploying a snake cam. Just press ⊗ when looking at the bottom of the door. Easy.

Fave Feature



PSM3 Verdict

***Rainbow Six Vegas 2* contains...**

Stacks of great shooting | Fantastic multi-player options | A crap story

Overall Despite neat adjustments to the gameplay, *Vegas 2* feels like an expansion pack.

78

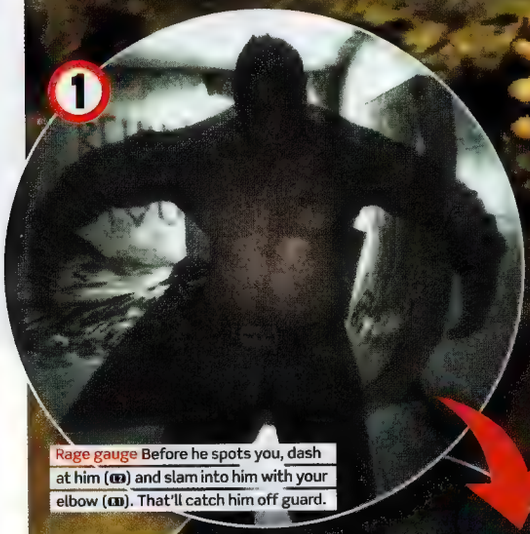
Pub Sega | **Dev** Monolith
Price £40 | **Release** March 14
Multi-player 1-8

ON THE DISC
Condemned 2 will be on the next disc - BBFC allowing

The big one

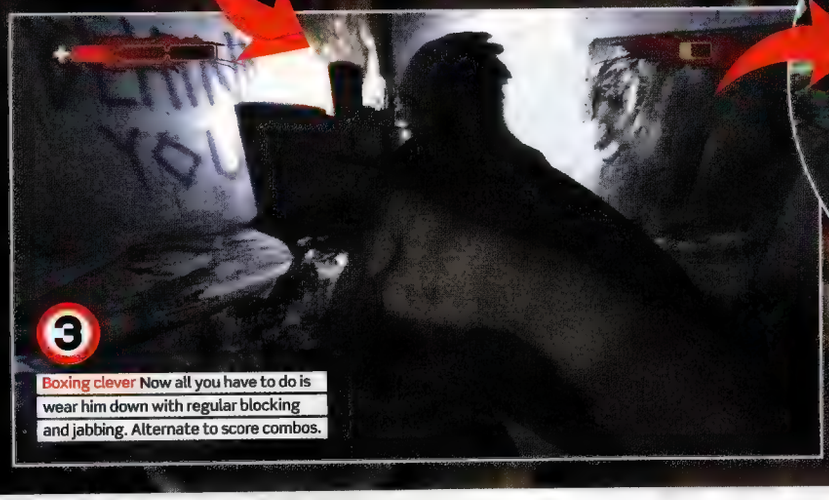
How to beat up a tramp

The quickest way to deal with *Condemned*'s rampaging lunatics



1 **Rage gauge** Before he spots you, dash at him (R3) and slam into him with your elbow (R3). That'll catch him off guard.

2 **Leisure suit parry** He'll be furious now. Block (L1 + R1) the moment he punches to avoid a beating.



3 **Boxing clever** Now all you have to do is wear him down with regular blocking and jabbing. Alternate to score combos.

4 **Groin pains** Finally, give him a swift kick to the plums (L3) and he'll keel over. Simple, really.

Condemned 2: Bloodshot

Part crime puzzler, part beat-em-up: but *all* twisted

"Send bits of brain flying all over the place..."

KNOW IT NOW

- Psychopaths in pig masks? ✓
- Hunting down a serial killer? ✓
- Drinking booze to calm the nerves? ✓
- A lovable lead character? ✗

Any game featuring a struggling alcoholic beating tramps to death with prosthetic legs in a crack house was never going to be a barrel of laughs, but we were genuinely shocked by the uncompromising bleakness of *Condemned 2*. If you like your games dark, gloomy and guaranteed to depress, then, boy, are you in for a treat.

You play as Ethan Thomas, a former FBI forensics expert forced into a life of tortured alcoholism after poking through one too many crime scenes. Crash Bandicoot he ain't, and he's hard to like or empathise with – especially when he's murdering innocent bystanders in pubs because he thinks they're monsters.

Here, chair and everywhere The enemy AI is fiendishly sharp. They'll stalk you, throw scenery at you and even hide.

City of the damned

The game takes place in Metro City, a festering dungeon of sunless despair inhabited solely by drunks, tramps, junkies and murderers. You've been dragged out of the gutter by the police and forced to work on another case, which means reliving the Hell that sent you mental in the first place. The game is one part FPS, one part beat-'em-up and one part puzzle game, blending crime scene investigation with punchy – and horrifying – violence.

The fighting is brilliant. It's the best first-person melee combat we've seen since *Chronicles Of Riddick* on Xbox. You can feel every horrible impact, from the dull thud of Ethan's knuckles to the cold, wet clang of a steel pipe, and you'll find yourself wincing with every swipe. Each of Ethan's fists is controlled with L1 and R1, and you can mix and match to perform combos. If you have a weapon equipped, either button swings it, and if you have a gun L1 is for aiming and R1 is for shooting. It's incredibly simple, and unnervingly intuitive.

Brute force

There are also context sensitive environmental attacks to indulge in. Beat someone up enough and they'll fall to their knees, letting you drag them to certain parts of the level and, for example, slam their head against a toilet, sending bits of skull and brain flying absolutely everywhere. The character animation and physics give the game a real sense of weight and each battle feels sharp and visceral. How did this manage to get past the BBFC when *Manhunt 2* didn't? It's an odd world.

Shame about the shooting. The aiming's dodgy and guns only have limited ammo. You can steady Ethan's hands by drinking booze to calm him down, but we still prefer the harsh thump of a baseball bat to the game's range of shotguns and pistols. Headshots, however, are awesome – aim it right and

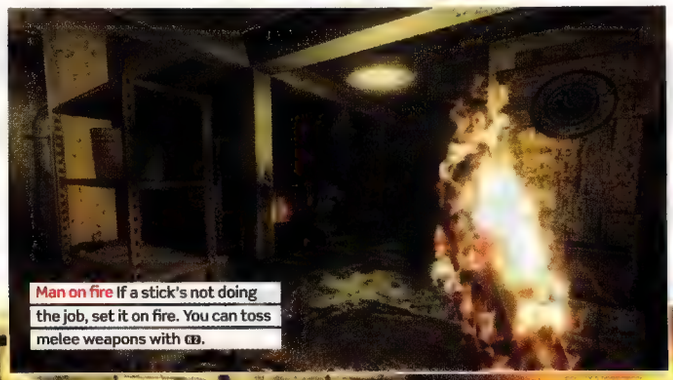
Stat bastard

During the game we closely studied...

- 34 Blood stains
- 13 Corpses
- 110 Bullet holes
- 08 Murder weapons
- 01 Satanic ritual

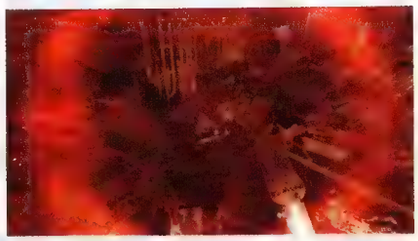
5

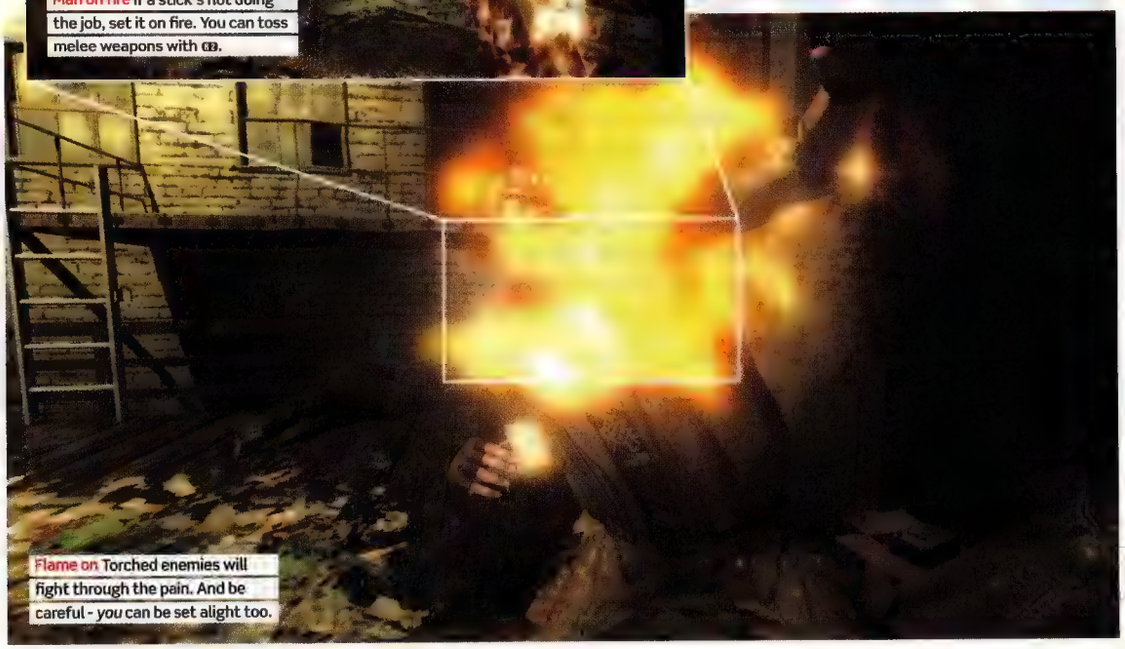
Bum rush Tactics vary between foes. If they have a gun or a plank, you'll have to see about disarming them first...



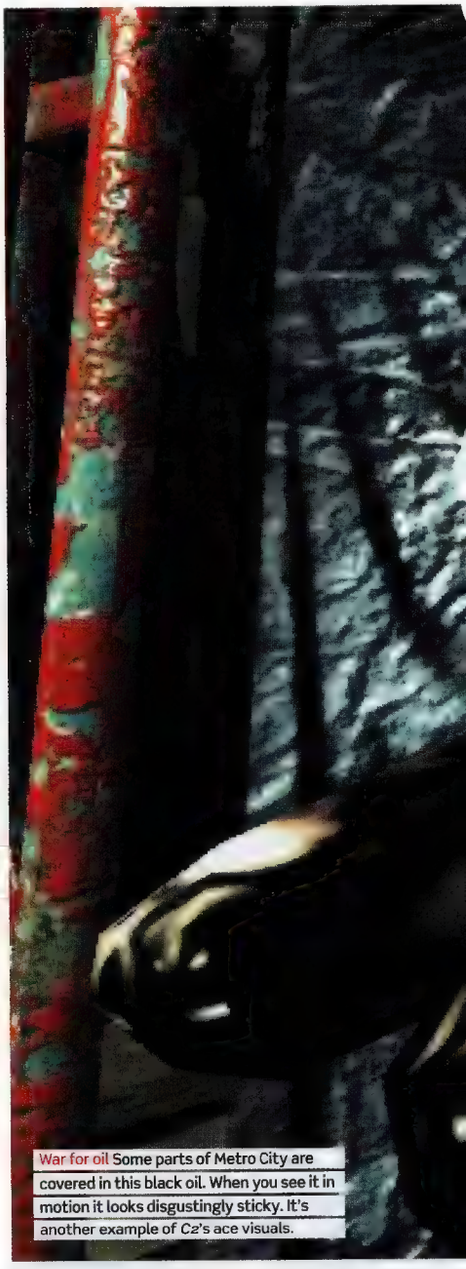
Man on fire If a stick's not doing the job, set it on fire. You can toss melee weapons with ○.

Mind over matter Because of Ethan's battered brainbox, he frequently has seizures and hallucinations.





Flame on Torched enemies will fight through the pain. And be careful - *you* can be set alight too.



War for oil Some parts of Metro City are covered in this black oil. When you see it in motion it looks disgustingly sticky. It's another example of *C2*'s ace visuals.

your enemy's head will pop open like a balloon full of mince and chopped tomatoes. Eugh. Luckily, there's more melee combat than there is shooting.

A crime a dozen

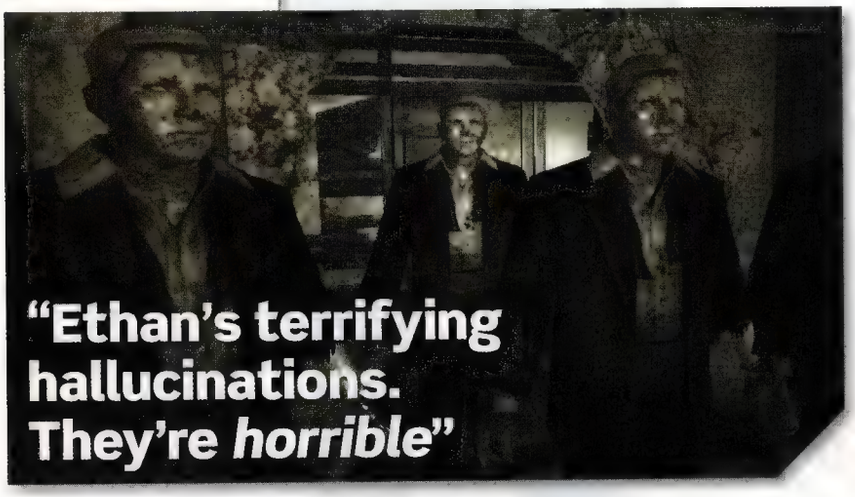
But when you're not piling a crystal meth addict's face into a television set, you're scouring Metro City for clues using your forensics skills. When you enter 'crime scene' mode you can use the L1 button to focus in on pieces of evidence and then report back to the police about what you think it means. The more accurate you are, the better your investigation score. So if you look at a bullet hole, you have to gauge whether it was an entry or exit wound and what type of weapon was used. The amount of detail in the crime scenes is incredible, and it feels like an interactive version of Kevin Spacey's serial killer movie Seven. You can also use tools like a UV light to reveal hidden clues and blood spatters. It's really quite ace.

You will have noticed that this is *Condemned 2*. What happened to *Condemned 1*? Well, it was only ever released on Xbox 360, which makes following the story of the sequel somewhat difficult if you've never played the original. The scripting and cut-scenes are incredibly vague and you'll be constantly baffled. "Why is the city covered in sticky black muck?" you'll muse to yourself. "What are those monsters made of oil?" "Who the Hell *am* I?" We had to watch cut-scenes from the first game on YouTube to get any semblance of continuity. In the first game Ethan Thomas was a clean-cut goody-goody copper (voiced by Greg Grunberg – Matt Parkman from Heroes, trivia fans), but in this one

Tramp fight

The game features online multi-player for up to eight people, and incorporates the game's melee combat. Punching bums online? Dubious, but true. There's an 'instant action' option on the main menu to jump directly into a match.

Fave Feature



"Ethan's terrifying hallucinations. They're *horrible*"

"Incredibly varied and genuinely unsettling"

Bad guy The character models are probably the best on PS3. The detail really is impressive.

he's a shuddering, pale, sunken-eyed alkie. And no longer voiced by Grunberg. Boo. The story's pretty weak overall, but Monolith aren't famed for their storytelling skills; remember *FEAR*? Exactly.

Grim shady

The big question is – is *Condemned 2* any *fun*? It's incredibly well-designed and atmospheric, no doubt about that, and the combat is ultra-satisfying, but it's *so* grim. It's like the *Silent Hill* series – brilliant, but hard to play for more than an hour at a time without wanting to boil your head in a saucepan. The only thing that keeps you toiling away are the incredible and varied set-pieces. It's genuinely scary – especially when you get to the doll factory – dealing more in unsettling, slow-burning tension than things popping out of the darkness and jumping at you. Although there's plenty of that too.

So if you think you can stomach the relentless dreariness, *Condemned 2* is one of the best action games on PS3. It has brutal combat, unique crime scene investigation and some of the most demented set-pieces ever. The only reason it falls short of essential is the lack of a coherent story and how the levels can sometimes feel overlong and repetitive. The shooting also needs work, but that's not a game-destroying problem. *Condemned 2*'s unflinching violence may seem gratuitous, but is it ever entertaining. **Andy Kelly**

Blood sport Enemies' faces will get battered and bloody as you pummel them. *C2* ain't shy of a bit of gore.

PSM3 Verdict

***Turok* contains...**
Serial killers | Vagrants | Junkies
Scumbags | Bums | Down-and-outs

Overall Gorgeous visuals, tough hand-to-hand combat and insanely creepy. Shame it's so damn dreary.

81

Pub Sega | **Dev** Sumo Digital
Price £40 | **Release** Out now
Multi-player 1-4

ON THE DISC

Ball or nothing Here's the *Monkey Ball* court in all its glory. Notice the monkeys littering the stage – this is Meemee's 'distraction' special ability.

Sega Superstars Tennis

Imagine *Virtua Tennis* with Sega characters – you've just imagined this

KNOW IT NOW

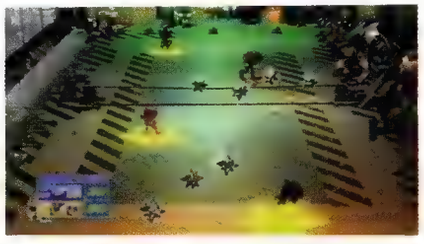
Incredibly addictive minigames? ☑
Brilliant unlockable characters? ☑
Loads of retro-tastic unlockable courts? ☑
A 'proper' tennis simulation? ☒

We love *Virtua Tennis*, but can Andy Roddick summon a group of dancing aliens to distract his opponent? *Unlikely*. That's why we love *Sega Superstars Tennis*. It takes all of *VT*'s best bits – the simple controls, the ball physics, the minigames – and sprinkles them with Sega magic, turning it into an explosive kaleidoscope of silly fun. Being supersonic hedgehogs and tiny ball-dwelling monkeys will always be more fun than blokes in headbands.

The ages of Sega

The game's hub is Planet Superstars – a multi-coloured portal leading to dozens of exhibition tournaments, singles matches, doubles matches and preposterous Sega-styled minigames. Each area is themed after a famous Sega franchise – the Curien Mansion from the *House Of The Dead* series, *Sonic*'s Green Hill Zone, Coconut Beach from *OutRun* – and has challenges specific to its theme. So in Green Hill Zone you compete against the clock to collect rings while in the *House Of The Dead* stage you smack zombies with tennis rackets – all the challenges are marvellously addictive. In Planet Superstars mode (Story mode, basically) you're rated for your performance, and you will get addicted to trying to score AAA on every challenge.

The difficulty curve is well-pitched, and highly engaging. For example, Sonic's first mission sees you simply collecting rings and dodging projectiles. But later you have to collect the rings in a certain order. Then the rings are moving. Then there are more projectiles. Then you have to collect them in a certain order *while they're moving*. It's delightfully frantic, and also makes you better at regular tennis matches as it lets you get used to your chosen character's speed and movement style. Each varies greatly. They have basic classes – all-rounder, speed, power, control – but each



Junk odyssey This court's based on the Scrap Brain Zone from the original Mega Drive *Sonic The Hedgehog*.

Sega Superstars Tennis

"Being a supersonic hedgehog will always be more fun than a bloke in a headband"

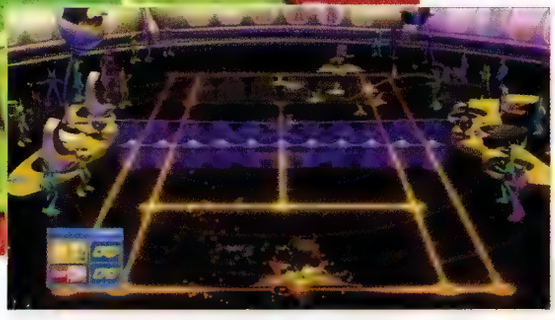
Monkey business AiAi isn't in his ball, for obvious reasons. It'd make hitting it a bit difficult.

Kiss from a rose Amy uses her special move to work the other side up into a lovestruck tizzy, while Sonic works hard at the net. Now *that's* teamwork.

one has subtle differences. NiGHTS (based on the classic Saturn game – import review next issue), for example, can fly – but it makes lining shots up harder as he's floating above the ground all the time.

Game, set and smash

What about the actual *tennis*? Well, as you would expect, you can play doubles or singles matches, in tournaments or as one-offs. It's a pretty standard sim – use the ○ and ✕ buttons for different swings, and the analogue stick to guide the ball. If your opponent lobs it, an icon appears briefly on the court, hitting the ball at which will let you whack it back with a power shot – something *Virtua Tennis* fans will be familiar with.



Move it

When you unleash your special move you're treated to a gorgeous animation. Ulala does a dance and Sonic gets infused with the power of the Chaos emeralds. They're really 'ace'.

What *VT* players won't be so familiar with are the special shots. Score enough points and the star beneath your character starts to glow. When it's at its flashiest, squeeze L1 and R1 to enter Superstars mode. Each player has a different move. Sonic turns into his golden-coated Super Sonic alter-ego and his shots become so strong, they send his opponents hurtling backwards. Ulala from *Space Channel 5*, meanwhile, has shots that move through the air in the shape of a 5, confusing her opponents. And not only that, but she summons a gang of Morolian aliens that, if touched, make the other player dance uncontrollably. We are a bit concerned that some seem hideously overpowered, mind.

So why doesn't it score higher than *Virtua Tennis*? If you're not that interested in the Sega stuff (say, you're a confirmed miserabilist), *SST* plays a far more basic game, with simplified physics and reduced depth. Without the thrill of unlocking new characters, stages and music your attention might wander. Still, it's a vibrant, colourful triumph that smothers tennis in Sega's undeniable magic. We only wish the controls were a little more in-depth, with more shot types and more complex ball physics. The mini-games alone are *almost* worth the asking price. **Andy Kelly**

Fave Feature

PSM3 Verdict

***Sega Superstars Tennis* contains...**
A monkey in a ball | A monkey in a sombrero | A space woman | A flying fox

Overall Addictive minigames, great arcade tennis and sunny visuals. But a bit basic at its core.

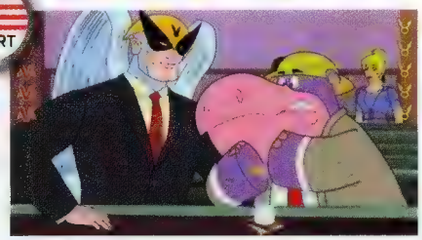
73

Pub Capcom | **Dev** High Voltage Software
Price $40 | **Release** Out now (US)
Multi-player None

ON THE DISC
Harvey Birdman will be reviewed on the next disc
PSP/Reviews

Harvey Birdman: Attorney At Law

IMPORT



Potamus prime This is Peter Potamus, colleague of Harvey and sex pest of Sebben & Sebben law firm.

Monotony clips this superhero's wings

You've probably never heard of Harvey Birdman, let alone seen an episode of the show. The cult US cartoon is as surreal as it is laced with adult humour, and features appearances from '60s Hanna-Barbera characters such as Fred Flintstone, Scooby Doo and of course Birdman – a third-rate superhero turned incompetent lawyer. The show sees Harvey tackle tough courtroom cases, aided by daft witnesses and bizarre evidence, and this is where the game draws its inspiration.

Harvey Birdman: Attorney At Law is like playing an episode of your own. You work your way through equally humorous cases, selecting from multiple choice comments when chatting to suspects and witnesses and gathering evidence as you go. Finally you'll enter the courtroom. A typical stage plays out with you searching for objects in different locations and then adding them to your evidence inventory. You then interrogate suspects to discover their deepest secrets.

Court out

Then, while cross-examining witnesses, you present your evidence to the judges. It's a simple case of selecting the right response to the question you've been asked to move the game on. At times you'll have to scrutinise your evidence for clues that will help bust the case wide open. The judge will then ask you to present said clues. Get the reply wrong and you'll lose a life, lose too many and you'll fail the case and have to restart the stage again. This is tortuous, because restarting means you have to sit through the cut-scenes again as you can't skip them. Arrgh.

Comedy secrets

Answer questions with less obvious responses and you might open up bonus content, such as artwork or extended clips from the show.

Attorney At Law is a novel idea (on PSP at least, you might recognise all this from the *Phoenix Wright* games on DS, which are superior to *Harvey*), but unless you're a massive fan of the show, you're going to struggle with the linear gameplay. It's not just Harvey's heritage that's debatable either – the gameplay quickly becomes monotonous and overly difficult too. One particularly ambiguous clue might slip under your attention radar, resulting in you replaying the level all over again because you missed the most minute of details.

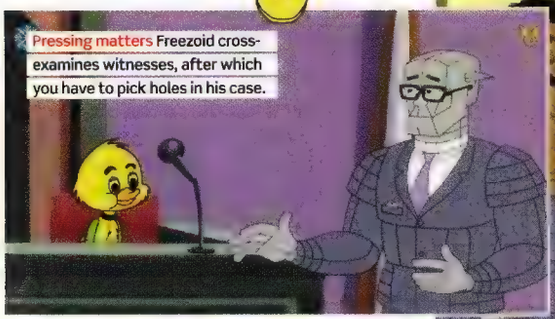
Harvey Birdman isn't terrible. There's certainly some fun here – and the crowbarred-in appearances of *Street Fighter*'s Guile and Zangief will have you chuckling to yourself – but the lack of diversity is criminal. We prefer the show to this frustrating legal jape. **Nathan Irvine**

PSM3 Verdict

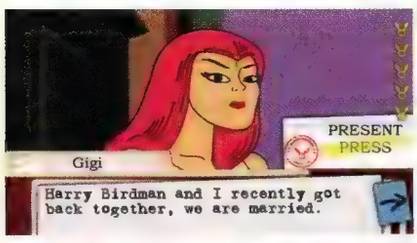
***Harvey Birdman: Attorney At Law* contains...**
Courtrooms | Quadruple entendres | The chance to play detective | Fred Flintstone

Overall A great idea poorly delivered. Akin to one of those Choose Your Own Adventure books you read as a kid. Shame.

58



Pressing matters Freezoid cross-examines witnesses, after which you have to pick holes in his case.



Cheat 'em-up Birdman's estranged wife. She cheats on him with Magilla Gorilla and sets his house on fire. Nice.

Cast offs Almost all of the characters you see here are from very old Hanna-Barbera cartoons, but with new personalities attached. They're a pretty funny bunch.

BLOODY BRILLIANT!

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Issue 36 2008 £4.99
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Pub EA | **Dev** EA Montreal
Price £50 | **Release** March 7
Multi-player 1-2, including online

ON THE DISC
Army Of Two gets its disc review next month

PSM3 BUY IT

KNOW IT NOW

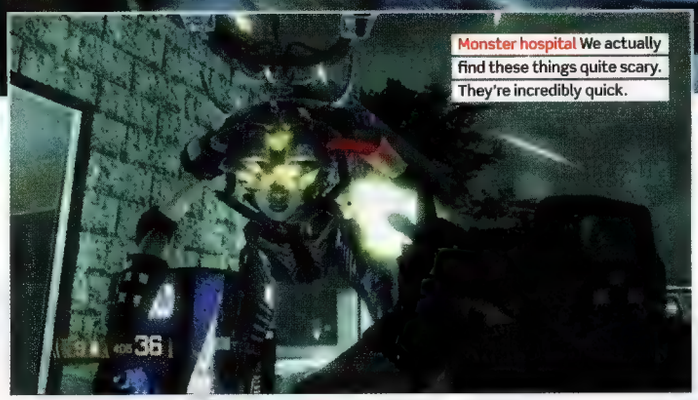
- Occasionally lame frat boy humour? ✓
- Jewel-encrusted rocket launchers? ✓
- Conversations about the Wu Tang Clan? ✓
- Cars that explode like we'd hope? ✗

BlackSite: Area 51

"Sometimes the frame-rate gets so bad it genuinely becomes unplayable"

Knock and roll These "octopus dog things" (as they're described in the game) have a nasty habit of knocking your squad over.

Worm and fuzzy The game is full of thrashing alien worms that can tunnel under the ground.



Monster hospital We actually find these things quite scary. They're incredibly quick.

Illegal alien The enemy designs are hardly inspiring. What's *this* supposed to be, anyway?

interesting. The setting switches to Nevada and you drive from a military base to the town of Rachel. You get to control a vehicle here, and the trip is epic, with a massive stretch of highway peppered with reasonably exciting set-pieces. It's here that your enemy becomes high-tech supersoldiers and aliens, which makes the combat a touch more interesting. The AI still isn't too hot, but some of the alien weaponry's fun, although the 'scatter gun' is a shameless rip-off of *Unreal Tournament*'s shrapnel-flinging flak cannon.

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Drive time Bombing around in vehicles is the game's best feature.

Story-bored

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Morale choice

Your squad has morale, so if you're getting shot loads they'll get upset – but kill loads of aliens and their faith will be restored. Phew.

PSM3 Verdict

***BlackSite: Area 51* contains...**

Big marines | Destructible environments
OK vehicle bits | Glitchy shooting

Overall It has some great ideas, but ruins them with mediocre shooting and a truly shocking frame-rate.

51

Mad for it Get the bad lads mad at just one of your men, and they'll forget about the other one...

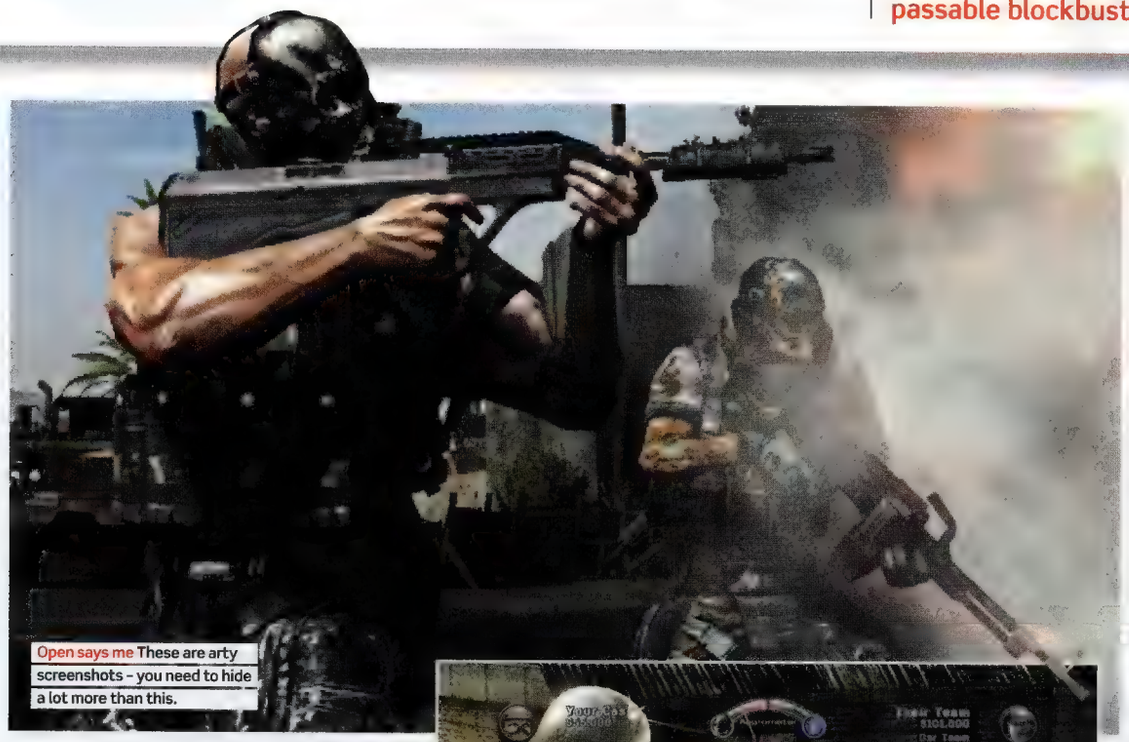
Big guns If you're packing a rocket launcher, you tend to draw more heat than with a pistol.

Body beautiful Ill-advised tattoos - big with flouncy-haired authority-flouting mercs. Or so *AOT* would have you believe.

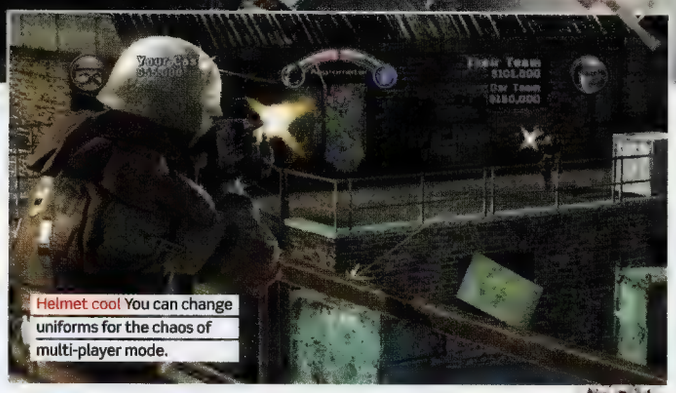
quarterback, conspiracy theory nut), rip their way through 18-years worth of political hotspots, high-fiving their way to the plot's incredibly obvious (and slightly abrupt) conclusion like a pair of wrestling fixated teenagers. Designed as a co-op experience from the outset, you'll always have a partner, with the second character controlled by a friend or AI. Much of the work done on the game since November has gone into improving the partner AI, and its made a huge difference to the single-player campaign. Although you still issue the same orders as before (aggressive and passive flavours of Go, Stop and Re-group) your pantomime-tough pal responds much more effectively than before, and by combining commands it's now possible to place him anywhere you want. Now you don't have to worry about your partner, you can finally relax into the pair's juvenile camaraderie – to the point where you actually look forward to running up and high-fiving your heterosexual life-partner after particularly cool shoot-outs.

Bloody mayhem

While you could accuse EA of pulling their punches by removing the now notorious 'pushing-feminine hygiene products into bullet wounds' minigame, it's actually a smart move. Coming into effect every time a downed player was rescued by his teammate, it was initially fun but soon turned into a grind, pulling you out of the action constantly. Reviving your partner is now just a case of standing over him and holding ⊗ for a few seconds, although the bar will reset if you take a hit, meaning you have to pick your cover wisely. It's far more immediate, and the game's flow is significantly improved. Likewise the vehicle sections. Brief to the point of redundancy, we really couldn't see the point of their inclusion, especially considering the lack of



Open says me These are arty screenshots – you need to hide a lot more than this.



Helmet cool You can change uniforms for the chaos of multi-player mode.

cool stuff to blow up while using them. Now they're mostly gone, with only the slightly dull hovercraft sections making it through to the finished game. Fortunately, they're few and far between.

War is hell-yeah!

Everything that we loved about the game before is still great – including the essential co-op mode, the blinging weapon customisation and the brilliant slow-mo back-to-back bits. Equally, the removal of many of the game's irritations makes for a far smoother ride. *Army Of Two* has even managed to innovate on a small scale – the non-magnetic cover system (which allows you to fire over and around walls without gluing you to them) makes combat feel fast and fluid, while the Aggro combat system (which draws the enemies towards the most dangerous player, making the other player effectively invisible) turns an MMORPG staple into a pretty effective combat mechanic.

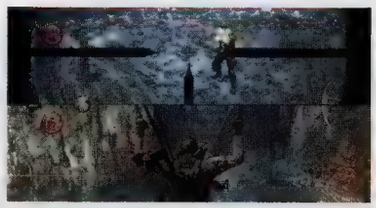
If *Call Of Duty 4* is a Michael Bay movie, then *Army Of Two* is a straight-to-DVD Steven Seagal flick – it manages to be almost as entertaining in places, but there's still a nagging sense that they spunked most of their budget on just one helicopter explosion. If a sequel (*Army Of Two 2*?) manages to provide more destructible scenery than the odd stray oil barrel, and includes a smarter plot, EA might really have something here. For now though, they'll have to be content that they managed to turn a B-movie into a passable blockbuster. **Jon Hamblin**

Shock and gore While the game's not as bloody as it was, it can still take the breath away – like the nasty eye-gouging incident during the second mission.

Buddies

Just the two of us

Rios and Salem do *everything* together...



He chutes, he scores Rios controls the parachute using the Sixaxis. Salem brings death from above.

Pulling power Rios gives Salem a leg-up. Salem can blind fire over the edge to get rid of any opposition.

Back To Back Copying a move made famous by the Abba girls, the boys cause 360° of mayhem.

You da man And when all goes well, the boys indulge in a spot of self-congratulation. Bless.

Fave Feature

PSM3 Verdict

***Army Of Two* contains...**

Improved solo play | Fantastic co-op | Lame plot | Non-destructible environments

Overall Air guitars all round, as EA (finally) serve up one of the better third-person shooters on PS3.

87

Pub Midway | **Dev** Midway
Price £50 | **Release** Out now
Multi-player 1-10 players (online)

ON THE DISC
BlackSite gets it's due review next month

BlackSite: Area 51

Sadly, it's another glitchy, mediocre sci-fi shooter to ignore

KNOW IT NOW

Miles of Nevada highway to explore? ☑
Alien and human weaponry? ☑
A range of vehicles to control? ☑
An engaging story and cast? ☒

After just under an hour of playing *BlackSite* we'd filled an entire page of our notebook with bugs. Objects were disappearing into the floor, ragdoll corpses were getting caught on scenery, their legs flailing wildly in the air, our squadmates were floating, enemies were running directly into our sights – it was embarrassing. At one point a sniper we'd failed to spot was firing at us, and as we struggled to locate the threat our team just stood around, not responding. And that's just one of an almost countless number of infuriating glitches.

The game begins in the deserts of Iraq. You're the leader of a group of Marines and have to infiltrate a underground complex the US government suspects is housing chemical weapons. This bit is as generic as the game gets; brown Middle-Eastern environments, swarms of cannon fodder and an on-rails shooting section. Some of the environments are nice, but the shadows and lighting look jaggy and messy, especially in HD. After fighting your way through a village and escaping from an exploding oil refinery, you reach the base and discover that there are no chemical weapons – rather, an ancient alien crystal that awakens an ancient, malevolent alien force. D'oh. You try to flee, fighting off swarms of alien bugs, before battling a giant worm. And that's the prologue.

On paper that probably sounds quite exciting. But the sloppy frame-rate and twitchy aiming do their very best so suck all of the fun out of the experience. In top-tier FPSs like *Half-Life 2* and *Call Of Duty 4* you feel totally in control of your character since the aiming is sharp and responsive. In *BlackSite* the screen seems to always twitch and judder, and the guns have needless recoil that sends your sights all over the place. It's horribly unsatisfying, and no amount of fiddling with the stick sensitivity would make it more playable.

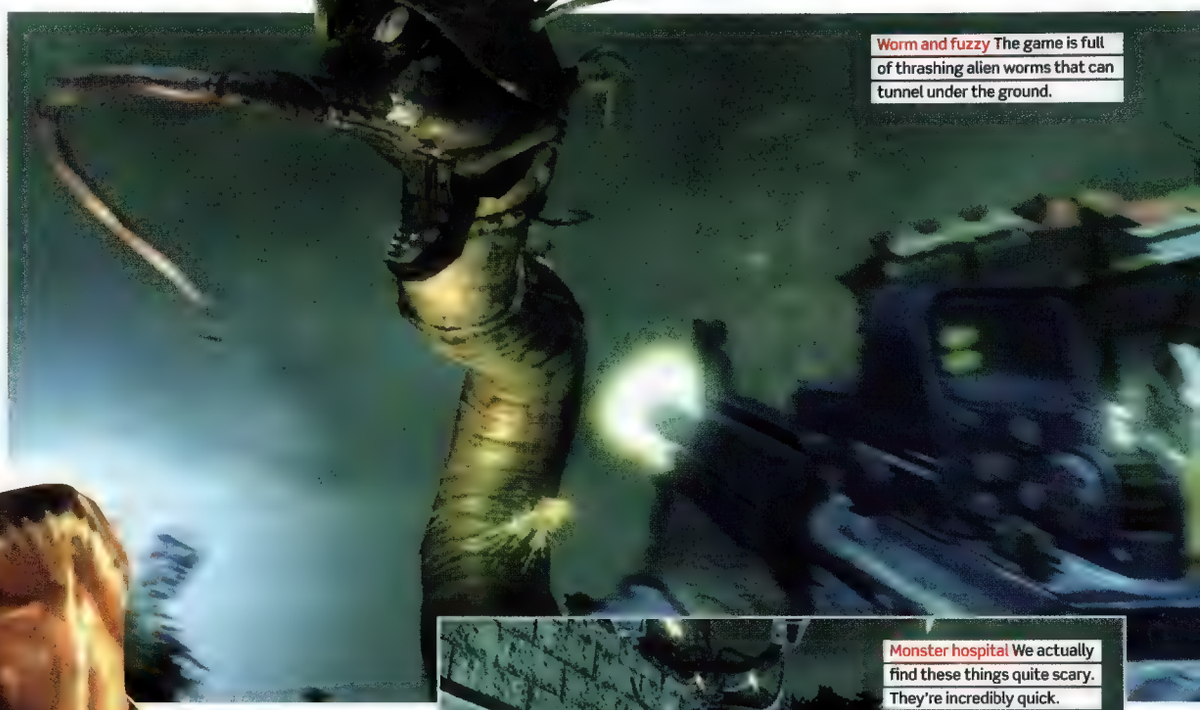
Site for sore eyes

Add to that your useless squadmates, the tiresome shoot-outs and the dumb enemy AI and you're left with something bettered by almost every other FPS on PS3, bar say, *Conflict: Denied Ops*. Anyway, once you're out of Iraq the game gets a bit more

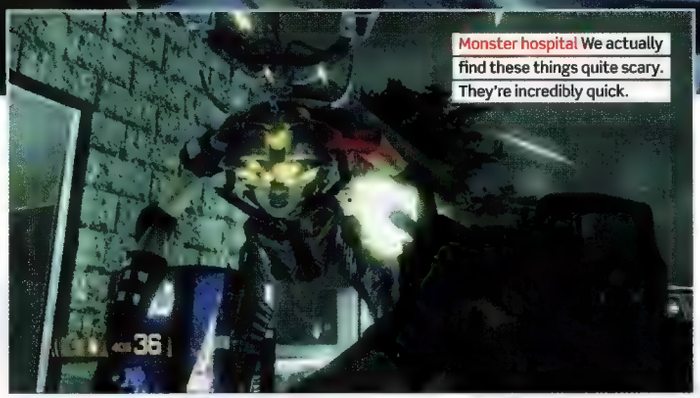
BlackSite: Area 51

"Sometimes the frame-rate gets so bad it genuinely becomes unplayable"

Knock and roll These "octopus dog things" (as they're described in the game) have a nasty habit of knocking your squad over.



Worm and fuzzy The game is full of thrashing alien worms that can tunnel under the ground.



Monster hospital We actually find these things quite scary. They're incredibly quick.

Illegal alien The enemy designs are hardly inspiring. What's *this* supposed to be, anyway?

interesting. The setting switches to Nevada and you drive from a military base to the town of Rachel. You get to control a vehicle here, and the trip is epic, with a massive stretch of highway peppered with reasonably exciting set-pieces. It's here that your enemy becomes high-tech supersoldiers and aliens, which makes the combat a touch more interesting. The AI still isn't too hot, but some of the alien weaponry's fun, although the 'scatter gun' is a shameless rip-off of *Unreal Tournament*'s shrapnel-flinging flak cannon.

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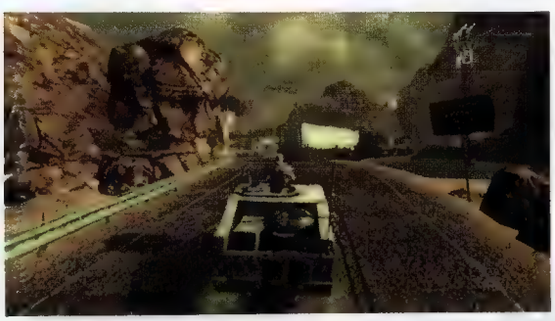

Drive time Bombing around in vehicles is the game's best feature.

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PSM3 Verdict

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51

Pub Ubisoft | **Dev** Ubisoft Montreal
Price £40 | **Release** Out now
Multi-player None

ON THE DISC
We'll review *Lost* on the next disc
PS3/Reviews

Lost: Via Domus

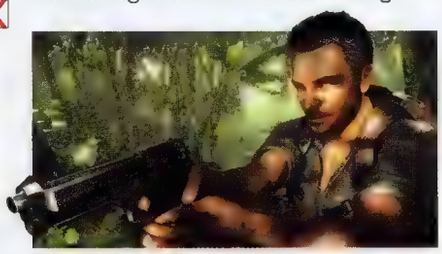
Poorly conceived TV tie-in is a complete plane wreck

KNOW IT NOW

- "Previously on Lost..." recaps? ✓
- Flashbacks that reveal back story? ✓
- Dodgy gameplay and poor voice acting? ✓
- Plot revelations about the show? ✗

So it begins with a huge close up of an eye. The camera pulls back to reveal a man on a beach, surrounded by wreckage... of the *Lost* videogame, the result of a terrifying midair explosion of bad coding, poorly implemented ideas and frustrating minigames. And the ending, oh God, the ending... How did he end up here? Time for a convenient flashback perhaps.

Polar bears. Hatches. Giant electromagnets. If none of these things mean anything to you, then chances are you haven't been watching Lost, the infuriatingly vague castaway show from celebrated producer and director JJ Abrams. For this videogame adaptation, developers Ubisoft Montreal have worked closely with scriptwriters from the show to ensure its authenticity. Unfortunately, it's immediately apparent from the game's opening sequences – in which you discover that your character is an amnesiac unable to escape from his shadowy past – that this particular collaboration hasn't exactly resulted in a radical departure from clichéd videogame storytelling.



Gunning for glory While pistols feature in the storyline, shooting is a rarity – just like the show.

Set during the events of season one and two (although featuring some locations from season three as well) the game is split into seven 'episodes', with each lasting roughly 30 minutes. At the start of each one you'll get a brief (yet authentic) 'Previously on Lost...' recap, a teaser segment for that episode, and then the traditional lo-fi swooping Lost title sequence. It makes you feel quite jazzed for the game itself, making what follows almost more disappointing.

Each episode revolves mainly around extremely linear exploration, with a tiny (almost non-existent) bit of gunplay thrown in. Most episodes involve travelling to various locations to find objects that will refresh your foggy memory, and amongst other spots, you'll get to visit the Swan, the Black Rock and the Flame. You'll also trek through the jungle and cave systems, chat with the characters you love from the show (most of whom make at least a cameo appearance) and solve puzzles in an attempt to flee the island.

Bungle in the jungle

Sadly, not one of those elements works. Take jungle exploration – while it looks huge and free roaming, it's actually an extremely small area surrounded by invisible walls. Trekking off the beaten path for more than a few metres results in a

Makeover While the actors haven't been scanned, their counterparts are recognisable.

Locke jaw The voices range from decent to awful – John Locke sounds like a drunken farmer.

Lost: Via Domus

"The fuse puzzle is overused, cropping up at least once in every chapter"

prompt offering to take you back to the jungle entrance. Admittedly, hiding in banyan trees from the black smoke later in the game works well, but entertaining sections like this are few and far between.

The big smoke You'll often have to leg it from the island's security system.

Talking to characters like Locke and Kate is equally unrewarding. Thanks to voices provided by soundalikes that don't sound very like the show's cast at all, and dead-eyed character models that resemble Lost-themed sex dolls, the fun of virtually stalking your favourite characters is almost nil. While it's true that some minor members of the cast do lend their vocal talents, their contributions amount to little more than a handful of lines. It does nothing to enhance the atmosphere.

The puzzle solving is by far the weakest aspect of the game, however – there are literally only three different puzzle types in the entire game. One involves using computers to manipulate the environment, one involves taking photos and the other involves changing fuses to restore power to doors and machinery. Although it gets harder each time (to the point where you'll end up scribbling endlessly on scraps of paper), the fuse puzzle is horribly overused, cropping up at least once in every chapter, sometimes appearing three or four times. It's incredibly lazy game design, especially when you consider all the gameplay possibilities a franchise like Lost could – and should – inspire.

It all adds up

Lost regularly features the numbers 4, 8, 15, 16, 23 and 42. They're the core values of the Valenzetti Equation, a formula designed to predict how many years humanity has left on the planet.

Don't get *Lost*

How Ubisoft Montreal (the usually reliable guys behind the likes of *Prince Of Persia: The Sands Of Time*, *Assassin's Creed* and the *Splinter Cell* games) thought this title was finished is a mystery far greater than anything dreamed up by JJ himself. It fails to work as either virtual tourism – the interiors lack enough detail to be really interesting. It fails to work as an extension of the storyline – Lost producer Damon Lindelof has publicly stated that the videogame is not canon. But worst of all, *Via Domus* fails to work as a decent game – thanks to its refusal to let you explore, dull puzzling and an appalling ending that was already cheesy when Dallas did it 20 years ago. This is one bit of Lost property you'd be mad to claim. **Jon Hamblin**

Stranger in the night You get to fill in the back story for some of the previously unseen castaways (the man, and lady to the left). What secrets are they hiding?

Numbers up Jack, Sayid and Elliott argue over who gets to type numbers next.

PSM3 Verdict

***Lost: Via Domus* contains...**

The Smoke Monster | Limited exploration
Poor character models | A rubbish story

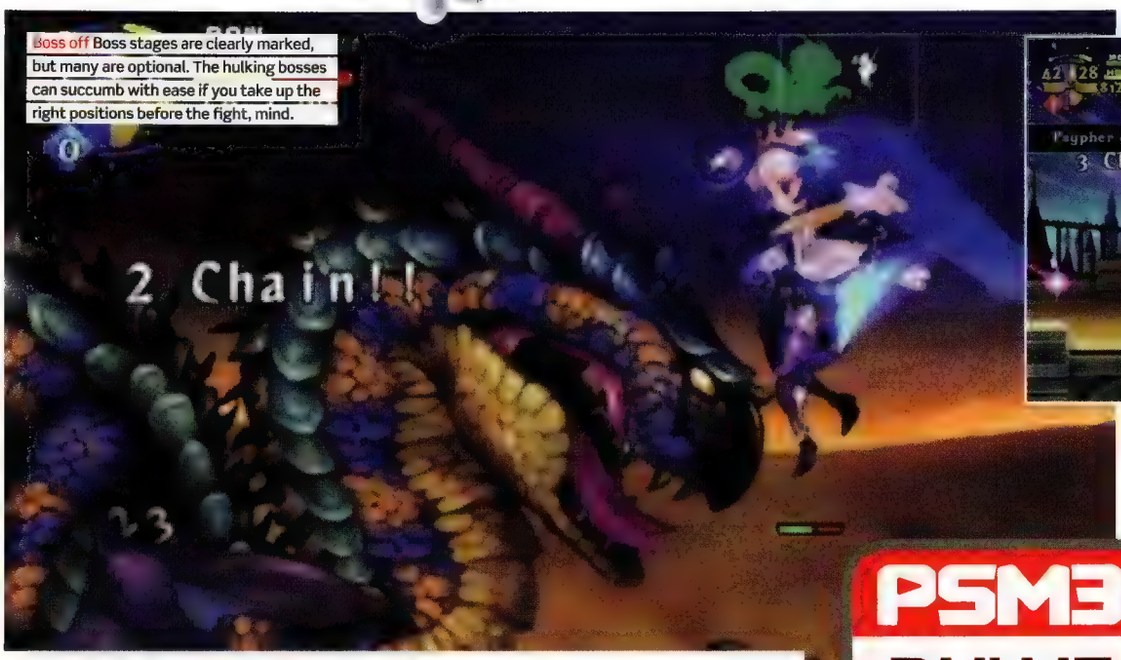
Overall Authentic presentation, but you wouldn't want to be stuck on a desert island with it.

42

PS2

Pub Square Enix | **Dev** Vanillaware
Price £30 | **Release** March 3
Multi-player None

ON THE DISC
We'll review *Odin Sphere* next issue
PS2/Reviews



Boss off Boss stages are clearly marked, but many are optional. The hulking bosses can succumb with ease if you take up the right positions before the fight, mind.

Sword's law Battles, with a few notable exceptions, can be over quickly if you've got your wits about you.

PSM3 BUY IT

Odin Sphere

Wondrous PS2 RPG arrives *very* late to the party

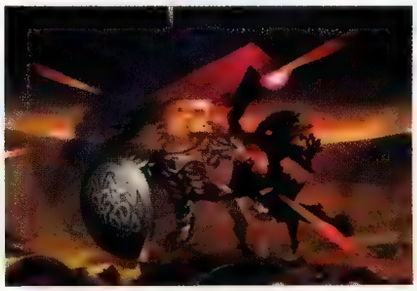
Odin Sphere, eh? It's more of a circle, truth be told. Everything in this RPG is flat, but fat and juicy with astounding art direction. Seriously, it's as if someone made a game out of stained-glass windows, then gave everything a lick of magical paint to cover up the gaps. It's absolutely faultless to look at – apart from the slowdown when the screen's at maximum occupancy – and in terms of sheer imagination and style, it eclipses many a muddy-looking PS3 game. It's one hell of an accolade when a PS2 game sets the visual standard not just for other PS2 game to live up to, but for every format out there. Achingly pretty it is.

Feel the *Sphere*, do it anyway

But how does it play, eh? Not like you'd expect. This isn't some retread of turn-based random-battling, clad in spangly threads. Levels are broken up into a non-linear network of short stages, to be travelled between as you see fit. Despite being 'flat', they wrap around themselves in a circle, so if a bunch of enemies are giving you grief, you can sprint away from them and ambush them from behind. Combat is real-time, too, like something out of a scrolling beat-'em-up – sword slashes, blocks and magic attacks are the order of the day. It's all irresistibly slick and sparky, but there may be an issue here for some: there aren't many attack combos available. But when the action's this fast and glittery, it doesn't feel like too much of a shortfall. Besides, there are five characters – each with their own timelines – to play as, but you'll have to unlock them in sequence. You can also perform alchemy and plant a variety of seeds to provide nourishing pick-ups – all done on the battlefield, not back at the base.

Not only does it look out of this world, but it also thinks out of the box, and you won't have played anything like it. One other downside? You're pretty much expected to replay some stages, to get strong enough to progress. Otherwise, this is a much fancier, engaging and thrilling outing than Vanillaware's other PS2 title (*GrimGrimoire*), and one you'd be foolish to dismiss for its 'retro' appearance. If you like your RPGs to be more heated than most, or you're a slash fan who wants more than just slashing, then you've nothing to fear from *Odin Sphere*.

Steve Bailey



Scene no evil Cut-scenes are all handled in-game, with no fancy CGI in tow – but they're not less stonking for it.

Menu at work Found a recipe? Take it to the cafe or the restaurant, and they'll whip you up a meal that will bulk your stats up nicely.

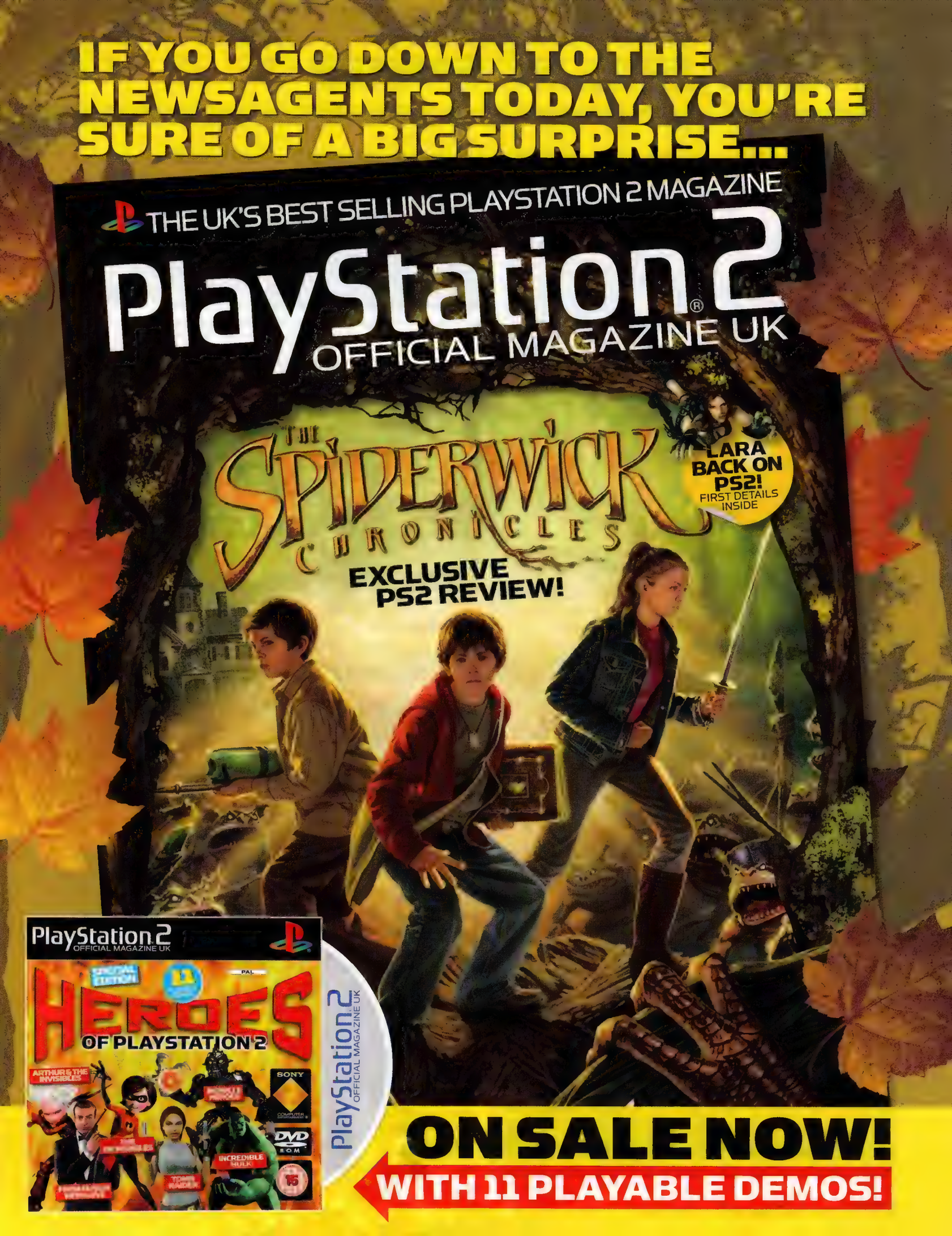
PSM3 Verdict

***Odin Sphere* contains...**
Sumptuous visuals | Stocky real-time combat
Five storylines | Glorious character design

Overall The sweetest eye candy around, low on strategy but alive with punchy action. First-rate.

89

IF YOU GO DOWN TO THE NEWSAGENTS TODAY, YOU'RE SURE OF A BIG SURPRISE...



ON SALE NOW!

WITH 11 PLAYABLE DEMOS!

Game for a laugh Here's one of the minigames. You have to navigate a fire-strewn track.

Empire | PSP | March 14

FlatOut: Head On

Silly, knockabout handheld racing

Liked the *Destruction Derby* games on the original PlayStation? Then you'll get a kick out of this. Featuring smashable cars, tracks littered with physics-enabled objects and upgradeable motors, *Head On* is, like *FlatOut* on PS2, an unashamedly silly racer that mixes preposterous minigames, regular races and arena-based derbies to entertaining effect.

Can you handle it?

It looks great. The frame-rate is super smooth and the courses are large and detailed; the amount of things you can smash up, knock over and destroy is incredible. It plays well too. The handling's fat and arcade-like, letting you bomb around the track and powerslide violently into opponents. It can feel slightly slippy at first – the handling of the first tier of cars is poor – but as you upgrade and unlock better vehicles it improves.

In Carnage mode you work your way through *TimeSplitters*-style challenges – a mixture of races, minigames and destruction derbies – and earn credits to upgrade your car. It's incredibly varied – one minute you're sending your driver hurtling through the windscreen in a twisted take on the long jump, the next you're in a vehicular deathmatch, crunching opponents into the sides of an arena.

But if you don't fancy that, there's a regular Tournament mode and the opportunity to try out the minigames individually. Our only gripe is the difficulty balancing. It can get incredibly tough early on, and the other drivers' AI seems unfairly infallible. They rarely make mistakes. But if you like the idea of sending a small man through a windscreen into a giant dartboard, this is worth a look. **Andy Kelly**

PSM3 Verdict

Loads to do, and slick with it. Difficult, though.

70

Crash damage The smashes look fantastic, with loads of debris and sparks flying everywhere. Nice.

THQ | PS3 | Out now

MX Vs ATV Untamed

Surprisingly tame, actually

We've always enjoyed the *MX Vs ATV* series, but *Untamed* has fractured our relationship. Barring the new practice arena, which you can mess about in between load-times, and a few new vehicles and tracks, *Untamed* is almost identical to previous PS2 iterations. And that includes the visuals, which lack the muddy next-gen panache of rival *Motorstorm*.

Drab landscapes and uninspired arenas fail to capture the thrills and spills that go with the death-defying sport. There's a new system for chaining tricks together – hold ◎ or ▲ and move the left stick – and some of the leaps are gut-wrenchingly exciting... but the problem for *Untamed* is that *MotorStorm* exists and in comparison it feels boring. Sure, the many vehicles – from motorbikes to monster trucks – handle well, it's sedate compared to *MotorStorm*'s wild unpredictability. Even the vast landscapes, that you can explore in a free-roaming fashion, feel pretty soulless. *Untamed* is resting on its laurels and it shows. And we're a bit sad about it. **Nathan Irvine**

60

EA | PS3 | Out now

NFL Tour

EA fumble their new franchise

***NFL Tour* is a replacement** for the *NFL Street* series. Unfortunately, it fundamentally fails to capture any sort of the excitement that its predecessor managed.

From the boxed-in arenas to the overall presentation, *NFL Tour* feels particularly low-grade. It's a five-a-side take on the stop/start sport, in which you choose any of the NFL teams and then drive them toward the end-zone over and over again. Field goals are substituted for one or two-point conversion throws – you'll get one point from five yards and two-pointers from ten – and since there's a Perspex wall surrounding the field you can run up and smash a wide-receiver into it with a huge crunch.

There are even QTEs where you tap ⊗ to break up tackles as you run – which is refreshing but fails to keep the entertainment levels up. Tour mode is uninspiringly one-dimensional, the action is repetitive and the visuals look shoddy. This is one tour that should definitely have been cancelled. **Nathan Irvine**

48

Sony | PS2 | March 21

ATV Offroad Fury 4

Watch your rivals soil themselves

Oddly enough, we'd rather play *ATV Offroad Fury 4* on PS2 than the PS3 game above. Sure, it might not look as shiny as *Untamed*, but the riding mechanics feel sturdier and there's a certain focus to the action thanks to the Story mode and its focus on your rivals.

Quad bikes, motorcycles and dune buggies are available as you race over 60 tracks, or you can even dip into the minigames and play, for instance, ice hockey – in which you take your motor onto the ice and shove a puck towards goal. But it's the plot that will keep you playing. It's hammier than a gang of piglets, seeing you battle for supremacy over your enemies, while cut-scene 'humour' includes you slipping on an oil patch and saying "That's why you call me slick". Really. But having race rivals to harbour a grudge against makes for a decent reason to continue playing. Sadly, it all becomes repetitive and most rides, except the quads and bikes, feel generic – reminding you that *ATV Offroad Fury 4* is average at heart. **Nathan Irvine**

63

Sega | PS2 | Out now

Sonic Riders Zero Gravity

Zero Gravity... and only a little more fun

This hoverboard racer starring the cast of the *Sonic* games has the insane, twisting tracks of *SSX*, but none of the control or style. The corkscrews and boost pads will be familiar to Sonic fans, and the tracks are covered in shortcuts and grindrails. It has the potential to be genuinely exciting, but the controls are unresponsive and the collision detection is laughable. Stray from the beaten path and you'll end up clumsily smashing into a wall or falling through the scenery to your doom. It's shabby, which is a shame because if the racing were more solid we'd probably quite like it.

The game's Story mode has an upgrade system that lets you exchange rings for equipment so, for instance, you can increase your top speed or create a vacuum up the track to suck you along. There's also a mode that lets you whack opponents with objects. But despite the variety and potential, at its core *Zero Gravity* is glitchy and little fun. **Andy Kelly**

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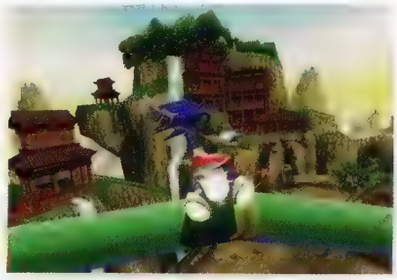


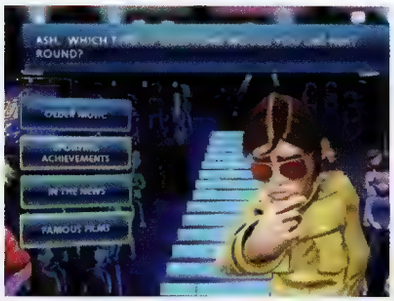
Buzz: The Pop Quiz

"The cosmetics and modes are tweaked, but it's starting to feel samey"

Sony | PS2 | Out now

Buzz: The Pop Quiz

The buzz is fading...



This is the ninth Buzz and aside from a few cosmetic tweaks – plus new round types like Wall of Sound, Name that Band and Name that Tune – everything is as you'd expect. *Buzz! Pop Quiz* uses Sony's clever controllers to answer (one of 5000) multiple choice questions, but this time they're focused around pop music from the early '90s to the present day; from Robbie Williams, to Shakira, to the Foo Fighters.

One of the oddest inclusions, though, is the almost indecipherable cover versions. This makes answering questions that little bit harder, as your brain works double-time to work out what the hell each song is meant to be. And while *Buzz* is supposed to be a party game for four, there isn't much fun to be had if you're playing on your lonesome. The solo mode lasts about two rounds and we noticed repeated question after a couple of plays. It's great for stoking up fond memories of '90s dance tunes and a decent stop-gap before the PS3 version hits, but it's all a bit samey. **Nathan Irvine**

64

Atari | PS2 | Out now

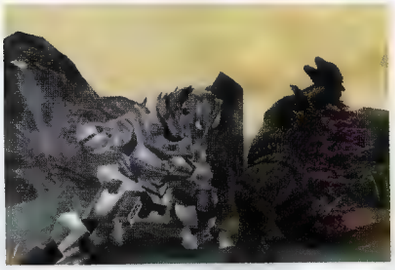
Godzilla Unleashed

Unleashed? Unfortunate, more like

Godzilla should be a brilliant games character. He's as big as a skyscraper, powerful like a thousand bears and doesn't give one iota about razing a city of screaming people to its knees. But *Godzilla Unleashed* is a generic monster mash-up that looks like it's been thrown together in a week.

The creatures from Monster Island escape and then fight it out across world locations such as Sydney and San Francisco. You fight against various other monsters while pummelling buildings and swatting a tiny human army that buzzes around during fights. Godzilla and co have special skills, like picking up buildings (▭) and firing eye lasers (▭), but it's their portrayal as *Street Fighter* wannabes that really stinks. Spinning kicks? Eh. Punch and kick combos? Odd. We're yet to see a decent Godzilla game, never mind a great one, and *Godzilla Unleashed* – with its dreadful graphics and poor fighting mechanics – isn't it. **Nathan Irvine**

41



PSM3 Awards

The highlights (and lowlights) of this month's reviews

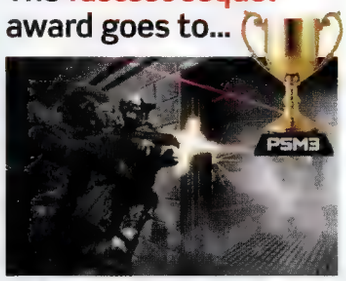
Big shoes to fill How can Sonic run so fast when he's got feet the size of the Taj Mahal? It makes no sense.
PSM3
The bigfoot award goes to... Sonic
Compare this Tennis shot of Sonic to this one from Riders. Sonic's already-chunky feet have become as long as his arm between games. What the...?

The right first time award goes to...

Lost

We spent months saying *Lost* was going to be pap – until last issue, when we went mad and said it was "looking better". We should have stuck with our first answer

The fastest sequel award goes to...



Rainbow Six Vegas 2

Cripes – it was only in PSM90 that we reviewed the first *Vegas*. And now here it is all over again. The *R6* boys obviously can't stay away from the roulette wheel.

Hi-Score Table

☐ The Odin Sphere	p80 89%
☐ Army Of Two	p72 87%
☐ Condemned 2	p64 81%
☐ Rainbow Six Vegas 2	p58 78%
☐ Dark Sector	p18 76%
☐ Sega Superstars Tennis	p68 73%
☐ FlatOut: Head On	p82 70%
☐ Buzz: The Pop Quiz	p83 64%
☐ ATV Offroad Fury 4	p82 63%
☐ MX Vs ATV Untamed	p82 60%
☐ Harvey Birdman	p70 58%
☐ Blacksite: Area 51	p76 51%
☐ Sonic Racers 2	p82 44%
☐ Lost: Via Domus	p78 42%

Buyer Beware! The games they're afraid to send us

Dora Saves The Mermaids Take2

The publishers of *GTA* (Take2 own Rockstar, remember) bring you their greatest yet... a Dora The Explorer game in which Dora becomes a mermaid. Screw you, Bellic, *this* is where the action is.

Go, Diego, Go! Safari Rescue Take2

We were hoping this was going to see Diego Maradona bear-knuckle fighting with some tigers, but no – it's another bloody Nickelodeon tie-in game. Bah.

Off Road Explosiv

It's a rally game with the Ford license attached. Remember *Ford Racing 3* (PSM56, 34%)? This is almost certain to be at least as good as that. *GRID* must be quaking in its, erm, tyres.

Extended Play

Start

CELEBRATE

84 The complicated crew of *Soul Calibur*
As *SC4* looms, here's how every character knows everyone else.

GENIUS

86 The 10 most outstanding moments in *Devil May Cry 4*
The maddest game on PS3 blown apart.

EXPLOITS

90 The 25 best characters in *Patapon.*
A selection of peculiar beasties for you to make best friends with.

SECRETS

92 Give scientists a taste of their own medicine in *'Splitters 3*
Experimenting on scientists for fun.

SECRETS

93 PlayStation's darkest secrets
With *SOCOM* and *God Of War*, plus *Portable Ops Plus* cheats.

FACE-OFF

94 Destroying Daffydd from Little Britain in *Smackdown*
Randy Orton dishes out some cold pain.

ONLINE

96 Roaring down the roads of *Burnout Paradise* online
Just how good is *BP*'s new online world?

RETRO

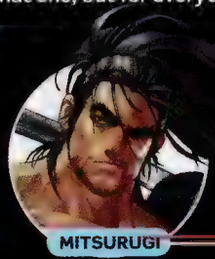
98 Why *Shadow Of The Colossus* is just so damn upsetting
Stabbing big beasts makes us cry.

Who's trying to kill who in Soul Calibur

"Welcome to the stage of history!" booms the Soul Calibur announcer, and you're in the 16th century world of people running around after the blades that determine the fate of the world. But with so many characters, how are you to keep track? Is Ivy trying to kill Cervantes now? Who's possessed by the Soul Edge at the moment? And what the hell's Darth Vader doing in the 1500s? We can't answer that one, but for everything else check out our family tree.

DARTH VADER

Dark Lord Of The Sith, perhaps best known for blowing up Alderaan and therefore probably a prime candidate for swiping the Soul Calibur. It's his first appearance in a fighting game since the dreadful, dreadful *Masters Of Teras Kasi* on PSone.

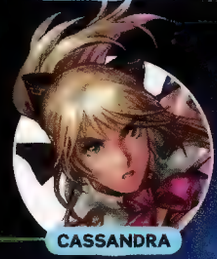


MITSURUGI

Born of a farmer and partly based on real-life swordsman Miyamoto Musashi, Mitsy just wants a sword that lets him take on people with projectile weapons. Often involved in the business of shogun Oda Nobunaga – of *Onimusha* – but is known for his scraps with Taki.

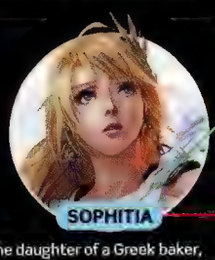
ARTHUR

An alternate costume for Mitsurugi, originally designed for Korea where samurai aren't very popular. Raised in Japan, which is why he fights with a katana.



CASSANDRA

Sophitia's sister, keen to relieve her big sis of the responsibility for finding the Soul Calibur. Back in part four with a new look.



SOPHITIA

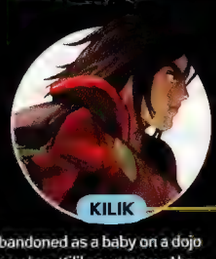
The daughter of a Greek baker, one day visited by a vision of godly armourer Hephaestus who told her to destroy the Soul Calibur. Vaguely based on Joan of Arc, see?

CERVANTES DE LEON

The boss from *Soul Edge*, Cervantes swiped the sword and then wiped out his own crew under its head-bending effects. Now recovering from a bout of amnesia after being attacked by Sophitia, Taki and Siegfried.

IVY VALENTINE

Raised by nobles but actually the daughter of Cervantes the pirate, best known for her whip-sword and ever-decreasing outfits.



KILIK

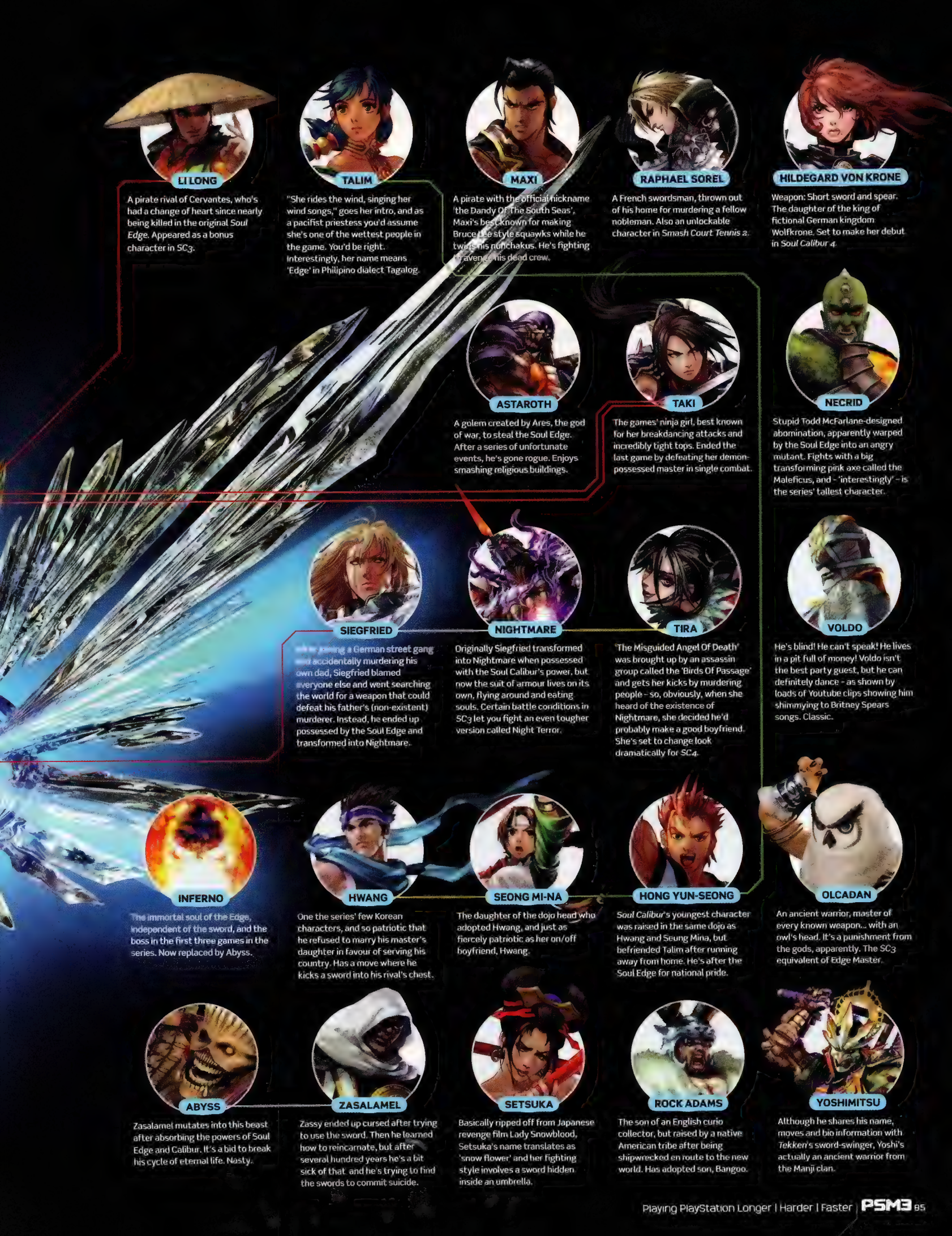
Abandoned as a baby on a dojo doorstep, Kilik grew up as the inheritor of the schools' holy bo (that's 'stick') and, along with Maxi and Xianghua, helped defeat Nightmare in the second game. Has a thing for Xianghua.

XIANGHUA

Raised in a Chinese monastery, Xianghua defeated Cervantes in the first Soul Edge tournament, and is sort of romantically attached to Kilik.

KEY

- Family
- Romance
- Alter-ego
- Enemy



LI LONG

A pirate rival of Cervantes, who's had a change of heart since nearly being killed in the original *Soul Edge*. Appeared as a bonus character in SC3.

TALIM

"She rides the wind, singing her wind songs," goes her intro, and as a pacifist priestess you'd assume she's one of the wettest people in the game. You'd be right. Interestingly, her name means 'Edge' in Philipino dialect Tagalog.

MAXI

A pirate with the official nickname 'the Dandy Of The South Seas', Maxi's best known for making Bruce Lee style squawks while he twirls his nunchakus. He's fighting to avenge his dead crew.

RAPHAEL SOREL

A French swordsman, thrown out of his home for murdering a fellow nobleman. Also an unlockable character in *Smash Court Tennis 2*.

HILDEGARD VON KRONE

Weapon: Short sword and spear. The daughter of the king of fictional German kingdom Wolfkrone. Set to make her debut in *Soul Calibur 4*.

ASTAROTH

A golem created by Ares, the god of war, to steal the Soul Edge. After a series of unfortunate events, he's gone rogue. Enjoys smashing religious buildings.

TAKI

The games' ninja girl, best known for her breakdancing attacks and incredibly tight tops. Ended the last game by defeating her demon-possessed master in single combat.

NECRID

Stupid Todd McFarlane-designed abomination, apparently warped by the Soul Edge into an angry mutant. Fights with a big transforming pink axe called the Maleficus, and - 'interestingly' - is the series' tallest character.

SIEGFRIED

[illegible] a German street gang [illegible] accidentally murdering his own dad, Siegfried blamed everyone else and went searching the world for a weapon that could defeat his father's (non-existent) murderer. Instead, he ended up possessed by the Soul Edge and transformed into Nightmare.

NIGHTMARE

Originally Siegfried transformed into Nightmare when possessed with the Soul Calibur's power, but now the suit of armour lives on its own, flying around and eating souls. Certain battle conditions in SC3 let you fight an even tougher version called Night Terror.

TIRA

'The Misguided Angel Of Death' was brought up by an assassin group called the 'Birds Of Passage' and gets her kicks by murdering people - so, obviously, when she heard of the existence of Nightmare, she decided he'd probably make a good boyfriend. She's set to change look dramatically for *SC4*.

VOLDO

He's blind! He can't speak! He lives in a pit full of money! Voldo isn't the best party guest, but he can definitely dance - as shown by loads of Youtube clips showing him shimmying to Britney Spears songs. Classic.

INFERNO

The immortal soul of the Edge, independent of the sword, and the boss in the first three games in the series. Now replaced by Abyss.

HWANG

One the series' few Korean characters, and so patriotic that he refused to marry his master's daughter in favour of serving his country. Has a move where he kicks a sword into his rival's chest.

SEONG MI-NA

The daughter of the dojo head who adopted Hwang, and just as fiercely patriotic as her on/off boyfriend, Hwang.

HONG YUN-SEONG

Soul Calibur's youngest character was raised in the same dojo as Hwang and Seung Mina, but befriended Talim after running away from home. He's after the Soul Edge for national pride.

OLCADAN

An ancient warrior, master of every known weapon... with an owl's head. It's a punishment from the gods, apparently. The SC3 equivalent of Edge Master.

ABYSS

Zasalamel mutates into this beast after absorbing the powers of Soul Edge and Calibur. It's a bid to break his cycle of eternal life. Nasty.

ZASALAMEL

Zassy ended up cursed after trying to use the sword. Then he learned how to reincarnate, but after several hundred years he's a bit sick of that and he's trying to find the swords to commit suicide.

SETSUKA

Basically ripped off from Japanese revenge film Lady Snowblood, Setsuka's name translates as 'snow flower' and her fighting style involves a sword hidden inside an umbrella.

ROCK ADAMS

The son of an English curio collector, but raised by a native American tribe after being shipwrecked en route to the new world. Has adopted son, Bangoo.

YOSHIMITSU

Although he shares his name, moves and bio information with *Tekken*'s sword-swinger, Yoshi's actually an ancient warrior from the Manji clan.

ON THE DISC

10 coolest moments in Devil May Cry 4

PLAYSTATION GENIUS

Joel Snape

Pub Capcom | **Dev** Capcom
FYI PS3 | 2007 | PSM3 80%
It gets repetitive – you fight every boss three times – but at least *DMC*'s time-efficient approach to design means you see Nero and Dante taunt the bad boys in their own styles.

1 DANTE VS NERO

The zenith of the game's bell-shaped difficulty comes exactly halfway through, at the changeover point where emo youngster takes on wisecracking veteran. He shoots your bullets out of the air. He parries every sword thrust. He's your equal in every single way except one – he hasn't got a freaky blue demon arm. Once you've worked this out, beating him is only fractionally easier, but it does come with the satisfaction of slamming him into the ground again and again and again. Thwok.

Mop top bop Even when Dante's on the losing end, he still looks the coolest.

Can't we just die Fiddling about with man-sized board games? Not for Dante.

3 PUNCHING THE OLD MAN

By the time you face the final boss you'll be furious – the game's just made you trudge through six levels of random combat and fight every boss for the third time. Mercifully, there's catharsis to be had – last boss Sanctus, is essentially a geriatric, vulnerable to a frustration-vaporising kicking. Nero responds by summoning up a gigantic Yamato spirit to pummel his eggshell noggin with fists the size of packing crates.

Older and out Hitting a pensioner? Make sure you morph into an enormous demon first.

2 CHEATING AT DICE

Early on, Nero strolls into a room with a giant metal dice in it. The rules of the man-sized board game are simple – get to the other end – but rolling the wrong numbers means battling hordes of random enemies. It's time-wasting at its worst, and the game *knows* how cheeky it's being – as you'll see when Dante strolls into the same room, refuses to play by the rules and slices the dice in half.

Palms race Zap him in the fingers, then dance up his arms and smack him in the mouth. Easy.

5 TAKING ON THE SNAKE WOMAN

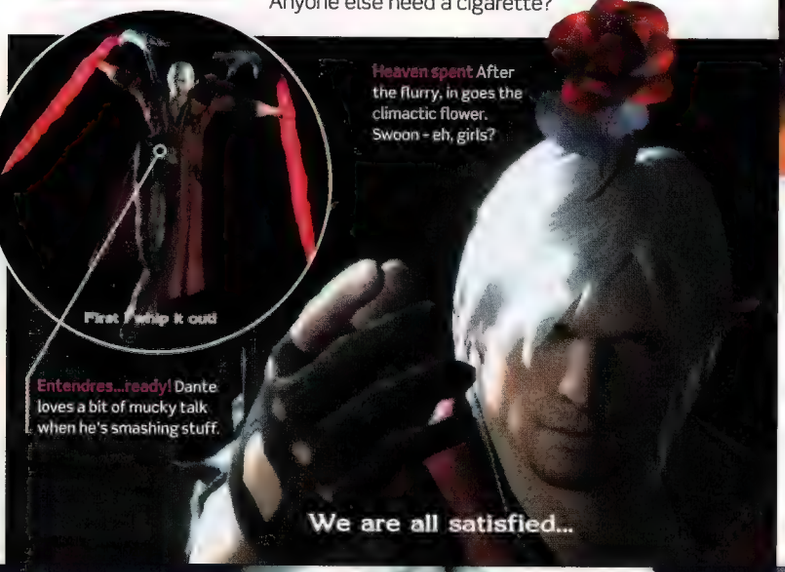
Echidna is simply good boss design – she's got loads of attacks, but you can avoid them if you know what you're doing. When Dante fights her later it's one of the tougher battles due to his lack of aerial attacks – but his intro, where he hoofs her own seed-pods right back at her, more than makes up for it.

4 FIGHTING THE STATUE

This is the best battle of the game. Dante's forced to leap frantically away from Sparda's swatting hands until he can blast the monstrosity with a cannon or fry its fingers with a laser. And the coup de grace is saved for the closing cut-scene – Dante hasn't the strength to ram his sword into the monster's heart, so he simply shoves it partway and *shoots* it further in. Stupid, but amazing.

6 "FIRST I RAM IT IN..."

Dante's always been a ladies' man. Which is why it's a bit of a surprise when Dante treats us to a bit of double-entendre laced banter as he slams spirit swords into a massive hellgate. "I thrust... really hard!" says *DMC*'s answer to Austin Powers, "I ram it home! I penetrate! And then... we are all satisfied!" He snaps his fingers, throws a rose at the wall, and it crumbles... probably symbolically of something. Anyone else need a cigarette?


First I whip it out
Heaven spent After the flurry, in goes the climactic flower. Swoon - eh, girls?
Entendres...ready! Dante loves a bit of mucky talk when he's smashing stuff.
We are all satisfied...

7 KICKING BERIAL UP THE ARSE

One thing you might not even realise during the game is that, during the brief pause when they gasp for breath when their energy bar's half-gone, every boss character can be attacked with a special move. To do it, you need to charge up Nero's yamato power to full strength and then execute a grab on the right side of their body. With Berial, this means hoofing him up the jacksie so hard he flies through the air.

8 ENTER GLORIA

When you get to a certain point, you'll realise that there's literally no reason for Gloria to appear. We won't spoil the surprise, but we will question if the game's really improved by her sole appearance – in which every twist and slice is simply an excuse for a flash of cleavage or a whiff of ass. Oh, it is? Right.

9 GETTING INTO PANDORA'S BOX

The mythical home of everything bad in the world gets reimagined as a briefcase, so you're never more than a popped clasp away from brutal murder. The evil of the box can apparently take 666 forms, but the game strips the useful ones down to seven – crossbow, bazooka, laser, glaive, gatling gun, and floating battle platform. Dante demonstrates the lot in reducing all of Berial's cousins to a fine paste.

Keep off the grass Tempting? Only until you realise she's attached to a slavering beast.

The ones we didn't pick...

De-stinging Johnny Bee
This fight's as close as games get to the insanity of a manga cartoon – the bee man summons up endless waves of sentient swords that flap around, then aim themselves at you. It's possible to parry or even shatter them, but eventually you realise that it's much, much easier to simply grab them with your devil arm, then lob them back.

The bloody palace
DMC at its purest – you against a load of demon marionettes. You earn skill points every time you step into the palace, so it's the perfect place to try out different combinations of ability.

EMAIL PSM3 @
Disagree with our choice? Then send us your picks
psm3@futurenet.co.uk

Eyeful tower Dante: not quite as easily embarrassed as poor little Nero.

10 THE GLOWING LESBIANS

Dagon's a surprise – a bus sized toad/ fish hybrid who uses a pair of glowing lesbians to lure in prey. They kiss! They cuddle! They come within a whisper of buttering each other's muffins! Poor naïve Nero's caught by surprise, but worldly-wise Dante's a touch more difficult to trick – he plays along as the girls cavort and scamper, but as soon as Dagon's big brother hits the scene he effortlessly escapes the trap. Then it's time to chop the big lad in half.

Hello, ladies Who wouldn't want to fool around with Ready Brek sapphists?

ON THE DISC

PLAYSTATION EXPLOITS

25 brilliant new friends to make in Patapon

Rachel Weber

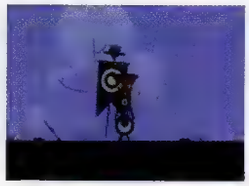
EMAIL PSM3 @
Want a game exploded in ludicrous detail? Tell us.
psm3@futurenet.co.uk

Pub Sony | **Dev** Sony
FYI PSP | 2008 | PSM3 81%
Patapon is a bucketful of battles and you're the boss. The catch? You can only control your eyeball army with four drums and some crazy rhythms. Along the way you'll unlock minigames, fight monsters and make stew.

MAKING FRIENDS 25 *Patapon* celebrities

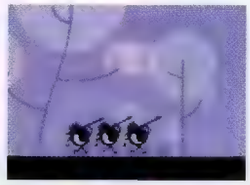
If you've just started *Patapon* and your natural rhythm is flagging, cast your eye over 25 reasons to keep on drumming. We've got the biggest and the best personalities in our line-up, from the hardcore battlers to the local musicians.

Meet... Meden
This little lady is the Priestess of the Patapon people, and always bothering you to do this, kill that, find the other. Still, it's hard not to like someone who calls you The Almighty.



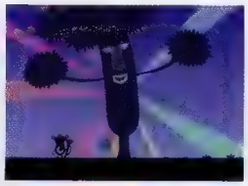
Meet... Hatapon
Hatapon is the standard bearer, and leads your troops around. Try and make sure you stay close to the little flag waver. He's useless when it comes to fighting, but let him die and your mission fails.

Meet.. Tatepon
Your axe-wielding Patapon spring from this great ancestor, Ban The Tatepon. With their tiny hatchets and shields these guys are good at in-your-face scraps and protecting the spear-chuckers.



Meet... Yaripon
Don't be thinking that the spear-wielding Yaripon are primitive grunts. They're the eyeballs you're going to need by your side if you're going out hunting for the tribe. Excellent in a scrap.

Meet... Pan
The musician of the tribe, it's a relief to see that Pan The Pakapon is more Louis Armstrong than a Pete Doherty. Find him by the Ubo Bon Tree and help him create a trumpeting masterpiece.



Meet... Ubo Bon
This dancing, singing Ubo Bon Tree is the place to go for branches. He suffers from an itchy head, and the only remedy is a little brass band action. Help Pan play him a tune for a faceful of noise and rainbows.

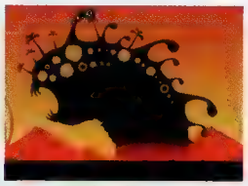
Meet... Yumipon
Archers are the backbone of any army, and yours spring from the memory of this guy, Don The Yumipon. Don't let them get near fire, mind you – they'll wilt faster than petrol station roses.

Meet... Gong
Gong The Hawkeye is a Zigaton leader with a wind problem. Try and fight him and he'll send a barrage of whirlwinds your way, sending your poor old eyeball army flying.

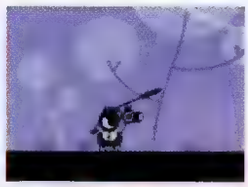
Meet... Dodonga
This napalm-belching dragon is the first of the ancestral guardians you'll find among the ruins. Enter Fever mode – which makes your Patapon more powerful – and he'll hit the dirt straight off.

Meet... The Zigotons
The Zigotons are the sworn enemy of the Patapon, displaying all the grace and charm of boozy hooligans. They favour a mix of guerilla tactics (hiding in bushes) and organised retreats (running like girls).

Meet... Majidonga
Majidonga is just like Dodonga with horn implants and the unfortunate habit of snacking on your troops. He's somewhat tricky to take down, but he's a must for boosting your army's strength.



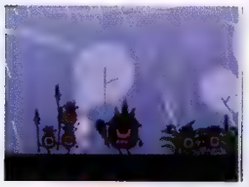
Meet... Zaknel
The Desert King rocks some hardcore attacks, including breathing fire, body slamming your army and starting ultra-damaging earthquakes. The only way to attack is from far, far away.



Meet... Kibapon
Your cavalry, the Kibapon, are like the Yanks in World War 2 – they wait a hell of a time before joining the fight, but are effective. Best used when taking on Zigaton attack squads.

Meet... Fah Zakpon
Farmer Fah Zakpon spends all his time hanging out with a smutty-talking plant, – who knows what he gets up to in his potting shed? All we're saying is, we wouldn't eat his cauliflowers.

Meet... Pop Bean
The orgasmic noises that Pop Bean The Legume makes as you tend to her are enough to make your cherished 'other' check you're not watching mucky films. Spruce her up and get veggies in return.



Meet... Dekaton
Sent shambling towards you by Gong The Hawkeye, Dekaton is big, beefy and has the IQ of a turnip. His big club is pretty deadly though, so use your shields to keep him at bay.

Meet... Kon Kimpon
You know this little guy is a hit at parties – everyone loves someone who can play the spoons right? Kon Kimpon is a musical maverick with funky headwear who hangs around infant rock formations.

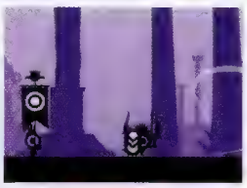
Meet... Rumble Thump
He's a baby mountain that likes music. Play the right tunes on his toes and he'll cry with joy, get it wrong and face a full-on tantrum. Did we mention he cries rocks? Pack your Man Size Kleenex.

Meet... Rah Gashapon
The chef might seem merry enough, but when an eyeball is that handy with a cleaver you know he's got a murky past. We suspect a stint as 'Gash The Butcher' in the Patapolis underworld.

Meet... Simmer Slurp
He might be a casserole dish, but Simmer Slurp has got rhythm. He also has an eating disorder, because no matter how much he eats he still wants more. Help him slice and dice the enemy.

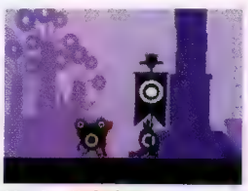
Meet... Gaeen
The stone goliath is more than just a psychotic pebble collection – he'll smash your fellas with his granite fists. Get him really mad and you'll see his laser beam eyes in action. This might sting a bit...

Meet... Dekapon
A hammer-wielding bruiser of a Patapon. It's nice to have style on the battlefield, but when you have to kill every mother hubbard in the room, call in your heavies. They're large and in charge.



Meet... Mogyoon
More than just a fashion statement. Mogyoon is one of the elite fighters that can be only created by using rare resources like cedar. He's slower than your average Patapon, but rock hard too.

Meet... Pyokola
Another upgraded Patapon to beef up your ranks. He might look like a rabbit that's been Tangoed, but Pyokola could kill you with a pinch. The easiest to make – just look out for rare branches.



Meet... Gekolos
Cancel the doctor – Gekolos didn't catch hepatitis at that tattooists in Faliraki. Yellow skin is just what happens when you're an eyeball born from a lump of the finest alloy and some juicy meat.

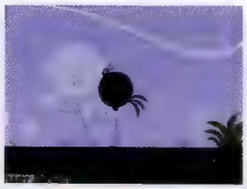
Patapon FAQ

Q Help, my army is made up of weak Patapon and I want to upgrade.
A If you haven't managed to kill them off on the front lines, you can 'retire' your Patapon. When you're choosing soldiers for the next mission, just select the redundant Patapon and hit ■. Remember, mind, you can't take him back.

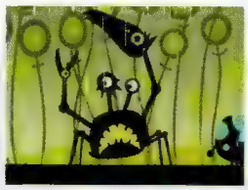
Q Where are all the minigames?
A The best way to unlock minigames is when you're hunting – make sure you kill every type of prey. For instance, you'll find the farmer after killing a Gancheek, but Gancheek are one of those you'll need to make it rain in the desert.

ANIMALS The local wildlife

Slow... Kacheeks
If you can't catch a Kacheek you may as well go home now. Displaying the survival instincts of a depressed lemming, these stand about just begging to be speared.



Fast... Motiti
Motiti are a bit smarter than Kacheeks, but then so are pebbles. Still, alert this bird to your presence and it will sprint off, leaving you hungry.



Deadly... Parcheeks
Found in swamplands, the Parcheek is a crabby crustacean with killer claws and bubbly breath that will knock you right out. Take care.

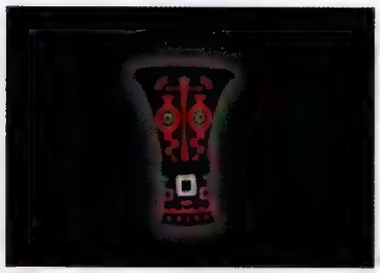
Flying... Poocheeks
Sporting the least attractive of the animal names, the Poocheek is, quite rightly, a mardy so-and-so. The big beetle will take flight.

Slimy... Gancheeks
The Gancheek might look dull, but hit it with a spear and it turns into a bug-eyed snail that will slime along for miles before dropping dead. Only comes out in the rain.

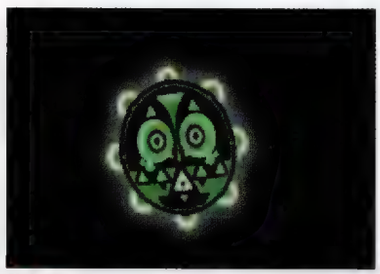
Pretty... Momoti
Momoti are tarted up versions of Motiti – still skinny-legged birds but now sporting a glam rock pink stripe. Use your archers to get 'em while they nap.

DRUMS The sound of music

Pon The first drum in your kit is Pon, the Drum Of Valour. All you need to do to get it is sign up to be the Almighty and promise to lead the tribe to Earthend. Easy, right?



Pata Forget the gym and steroid injections, Pata is the Drum Of Strength and owning it means you can start attacking anything you don't like the look of. Now, where did we put our axe?



Chaka Once you've got Chaka, the Drum Of Wisdom, you can use your Tatepon to protect the rest of your army. You'll find it abandoned in the ruins.

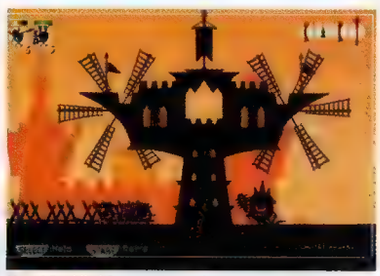
Don The last drum you find, Don is the Miracle Drum. With it you can summon the wind and the rain, but you'll need to defeat Majidonga first.

SIGHT-SEEING Admire the scenery

Knell ruins If you want to take in some local history you'll need to find the ruins. Google Maps has yet to reach Patapolis, but broken signs and dusty crystals help.

Desert If you can smell pork cooking as you wander the sands, it means your feet are on fire. To cross the Deplorable Desert safely you'll need to perform the rain miracle.

Marsh Sitoto swamp might seem a safe place, but the local weather is out to get you. Stand in one place too long and if, the lightning doesn't get you, the giant crabs will.



Mount Bachikoi If you want to make any progress at Mount Bachikoi you need to use the tailwind miracle. With the breeze on your side you can use your archers to take down the windmill.

RESOURCES Make the best of what you've got

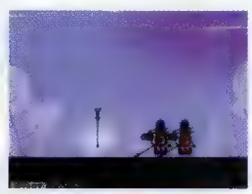
Earn... Ka-ching
Hunting is the best way to make money. Stay in Fever mode and look out for flowers that rise out of the ground. hit them with your arrows – ker-ching!

Mine... Ore
If you need some new stone for creating new units like Kabipons, pay Rumble Thump a visit. If you play the right tune on his toes he'll cry rocks.

Hunt... Meat
You'll need meat for Patapon and the Ubo Bon Tree, so keep making regular hunting trips between missions to stock the larder. Don't go hungry, now.

Serenade... Timber
With all those axes and trees lying around, it's only logical that the best way to get hold of some wood is to play the trumpet for a tree. Yes.

Grow... Vegetables
Fancy a spot of cabbage? All you need to do is spend some time giving Pop Bean The Legume a rub down. She'll pay you in delicious vegetables.



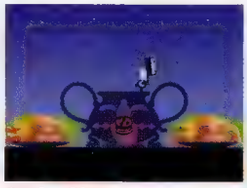
Scrounge... Accessories
The only way to give your tribe deadlier weapons and swankier armour is to pick them up from the battlefield. Get to them quick or they'll fade away.

TIPS The way to succeed

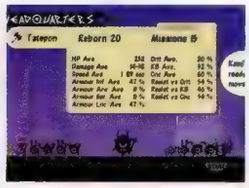
Use... Fever
Fever mode is worth it for more than just the funky tunes. Your fighters will be stronger, their skills enhanced and you can perform miracles. So do it.

Lose... Snacks
Make sure you've said your goodbyes before you face bosses like Majidonga – he'll swallow your little men whole so you can't revive them. Blub. Sniffle. Waaaah.

Choose... Hunters
Give yourself a better chance when you're hunting by leaving your clumsy Tatepon at home and doing a rain dance – it dulls your prey's sense of smell.



Cook...Stew
Wondering what to do with all that yummy stew the chef keeps churning out? Take it with you on your battles to boost your army's attack.



Recruit... Soldiers
Don't splurge all your money by filling your ranks with basic Patapon – always make sure your army is well stocked with elite soldiers like Pyokola.

Beware... Fire
If you're on any sort of rescue mission make sure your Patapon aren't taking their fire weapons with them – else you'll barbecue the captive.

ON THE DISC

PLAYSTATION SECRETS

Torturing scientists in TimeSplitters: Future Perfect

"Watch him inflate, shrink, catch fire and then explode"

1 Fire and water

It burns, it burns! Fire and electricity, zapped into your test subject's body. Adjust the dose by fiddling with the 'thermal' and 'electric' sliders, but give him too much and he'll explode. When he catches fire he'll start running around the cage screaming. Nice.

2 Small fry

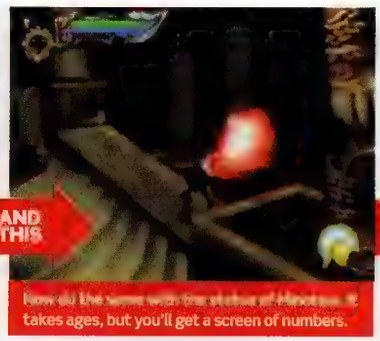
Ice shrink You can shrink the scientist to the size of a small dog. For added effect, use 'cranial expansion' to give him a giant, misshapen head. Brilliantly, as he gets smaller his voice rises in pitch and his pleas for mercy become impossible not to laugh at.

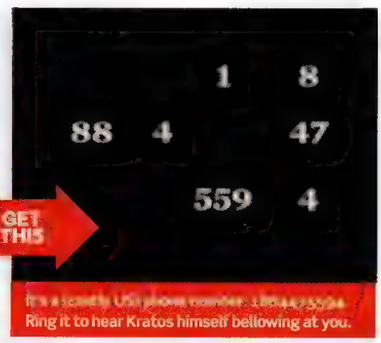
3 Blast factor

Weird science For a twisted finale, max out every slider on the control program and watch the test subject inflate, shrink, get electrocuted, turn into a zombie, burst into flames and then explode into a fountain of blood and giblets. Bleurgh.

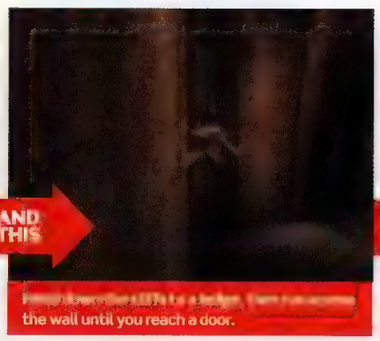
PlayStation's best kept secrets uncovered every month

Secret phone number › **God Of War** › "Hello, Kratos speaking..."

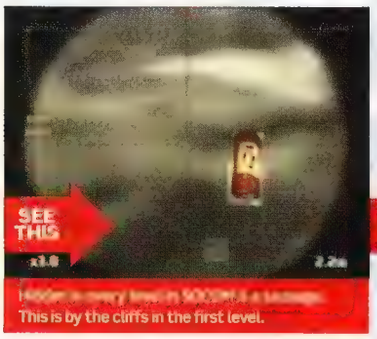


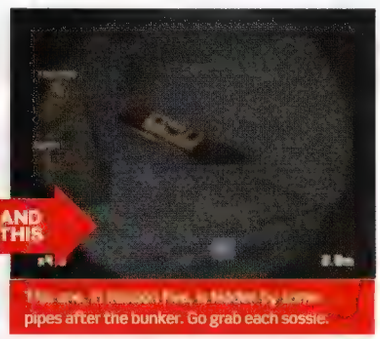


Secret weapon › **Warrior Within** › Hockey stick



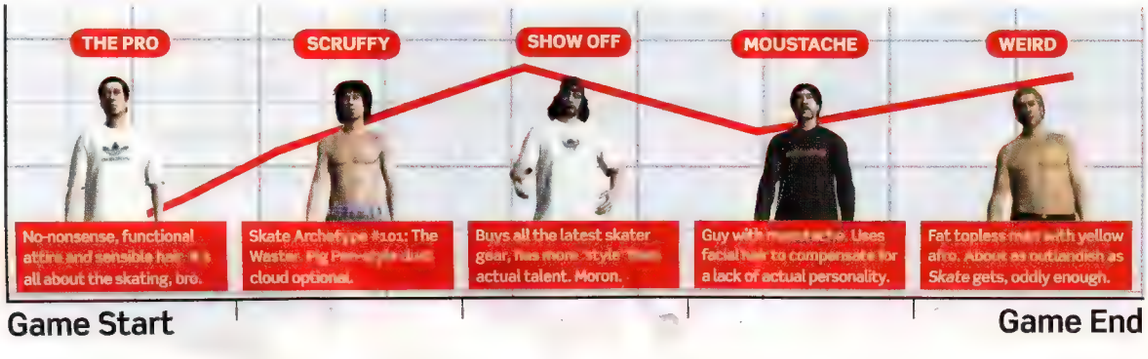
Meat feast › **SOCOM: Combined Assault** › Spot the sausage





Zero to hero in... Skate

He was a skater boy. She said, "See you later, boy". And no wonder she did – look at this lot...


THE PRO
SCRUFFY
SHOW OFF
MOUSTACHE
WEIRD
No-nonsense, functional attire and sensible hair – it's all about the skating, bro.
Skate Archetype #101: The Waster. Pig Pen-style dust cloud optional.
Buys all the latest skater gear, has more style than actual talent. Moron.
Guy with moustache. Uses facial hair to compensate for a lack of actual personality.
Fat topless man with yellow afro. About as outlandish as Skate gets, oddly enough.
Mental
Game Start
Game End

The Top 5

Cheats you *must* know

1 Portal
Level Select
While playing the game, press ←(4), L1, →(4), R1 to unlock all levels.

2 Castlevania: Dracula X Chronicles
Unlock original *Dracula X: Rondo Of Blood*
In Stage Four is an area where the lower section of a wall can be destroyed to reveal a bomb. Attack the bomb to destroy the rest of the wall. Through here is an item that unlocks the original *Dracula X: Rondo Of Blood* for play.

3 Thrillville: Off The Rails
All rides
While in a park, press ⊡, ⊙, △, ⊡, ⊙, △(2) to unlock all rides.

4 MGS: Portable Ops Plus
Boss Rush mode
Have a save file from *MGS: Portable Ops* on your memory stick to unlock Boss Rush mode.

5 MX Vs ATV Untamed
Unlock all handlebars
At the menu, select the Cheat Codes option, then enter "NOHANDS" as a code.

ON THE DISC
Expect some more on *TNA*

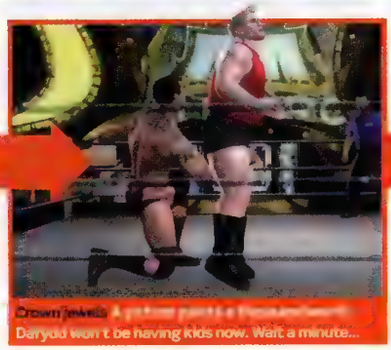
PLAYSTATION FACE-OFF

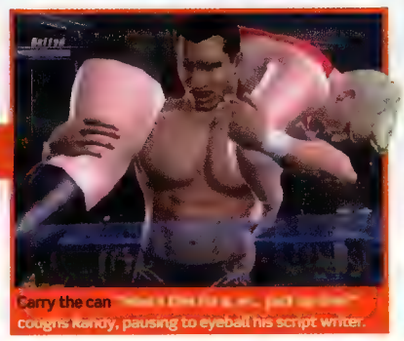
Little Britain star gets a kicking in Smackdown

David Cook

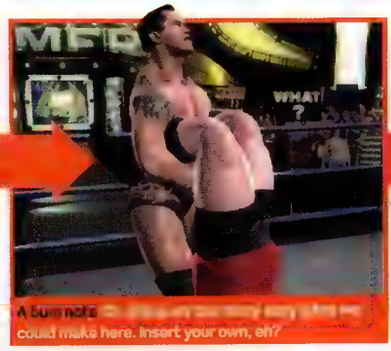
"I'm the only gay in the ring"
The Fight
DAFYDD THOMAS
THE ONLY GAY IN THE VILLAGE
One of the main characters in Little Britain.
Not really the only gay in the village.
Same name as a Welsh politician
VS
RANDY ORTON
WWE HEAVYWEIGHT CHAMP
Held the WWE title three times.
Has double-jointed shoulders.
Loves Metallica and Pantera.
Was discharged from the Marines.
"Homophobe!"

Cheesy does it "Hello, Randy. I'm Daffydd. Are you gay? No? You HOMOPHOBE! Have that!"


Drawn jewels Daffydd won't be having kids now. Wait a minute...


Carry the can cousins Randy, pausing to eyeball his script writer.

Choking aside Daffydd's only hope is to look for help from Myfanwy the barmaid. None comes.



A Sum note could make here. Insert your own, eh?

Times tables Randy, making throat-slit gestures to ringside.

USE WWE SMACKDOWN 2008

Go to Create-A-Superstar mode

Editing Tip Try cladding Daffydd in different outfits to add your own slant.

MAKE DAFFYDD

Hair	1/73
Head	-11, 7, 14
Forehead	-80, 23, 8, 22
Eyes	1/9
Eyebrows	16/38
Lips	2/16
Teeth	1/14
Skin tone	11/12
Skin aging	21
Piercings	19/20
Height	182cm
Body type	21
Neck	100, 26, 13
Shoulders	Frohawk
Chest	-38, -22, -70
Abdomen	0, 37, 90
Waist	75, 76
Arms	-59, 43, -17
Hands	-32, 29
Legs	-9, 37, 33
Feet	-57, -29, -70
Definition	6/9
Tops	37/40
Accessories	4/12
Underwear	1/31
Boots	30/33
Style	Showman
Signs	Thank You For The Wrestling

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Daffydd was created by Tom Johnstone, winner of the www.caws.ws Create-A-Wrestler contest.

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ON THE DISC

There's no place for learners in Burnout Paradise online

David Cook

Pub EA
Dev Criterion
FYI PS3 | 2008 | PSM3 97 89%
Criterion remodels *Burnout* once again, creating a free-roaming environment called Paradise City. Having to locate events for yourself muddies the focus a tiny bit, but *Paradise* is still a bold, muscular reinvention of the series. Looks the absolute business too.

To seriously compete in *Burnout Paradise*'s online mode, you'll need a few things. One of the serious, top-end motors – because everyone else seems to have one. An encyclopaedic knowledge of the streets and alleys of Paradise City – everyone else seems to have that as well. And a big dollop of patience too.

But first thing's first – you'll doubtless have heard of *BP*'s seamless 'drop-in, drop-out' online system, and it works like a charm. Jab → on the pad during the main game to bring up a few menu options; Friends, Freeburn Online, Line-up (more on the next page), Unranked Race, Ranked Race, Leaderboard and News. Select the one you want, press → a couple more times to pass through a few more menus and you're in – easy as that.

Enter a hosted game, and there'll be up to eight of you in Paradise City. What tasks you're engaged in is up to the host – there's a set list of challenges he can choose from. He might get you to see who can rack up the biggest number of near-misses, for instance, or introduce a team challenge asking you to head to the beach and get 45 seconds of Air Time between you – harder than it sounds, and frustrating if someone quits because it resets the task entirely.

A little patience

But what you'll probably really want is to race, and that's what requires patience – you can't until the host says so. If you're hosting a game, of course, you can race when you like but it can take a while to get enough people into your game to make such an event worthwhile. And then, when you do race, you find everyone has unlocked all the high-powered motors in single-player mode and knows Paradise City's streets like the backs of their hands. This isn't one for novices.

Yet there's no doubt that *Paradise* is terrific fun online, whether you're racing or just messing about in the challenges. Just make sure you've played solo enough before you begin. You'll get absolutely creamed otherwise.

ONLINE VERDICT

Lots of players? Plenty – there's always enough players knocking about.
Buy it just for online? You'll need to play solo for ages to be ready for it.

GAMEPLAY Defining moment

There are moments playing *Burnout Paradise* online that the play area seems to become a touch bogged down in screen furniture, as you can see. It's all essential information, though...

Press ➔ to bring up the Easy Drive menu, which lets you drop-in and drop-out of events, as well as showing which of your friends is online, take a look at the world map and more besides.

The ticker scrolling along the bottom of the screen will tell you of any Team Challenges currently ongoing. This one, for instance, asks everyone to meet at the Country Club. Which is no challenge whatsoever, frankly.

As well as Team Challenges, there are ongoing contests to see, for instance, who can rack up the most Air Time, can perform the most barrel rolls, and so on. The chart here displays the latest info.

RACING Design a track

The most fun to be had in *Burnout Paradise* is in hosting events yourself – this lets you decide just what everyone else is going to be doing, and you can change your mind on a whim. It's like being God, if God only had power over car games. Setting up your own races is fun, and you can create contests that are as complicated as you like.

1 Route planning

First, it's time to choose your route. You can place the start and finish lines pretty much anywhere, and you can also lay down checkpoints that need to be raced through. Playing with these made us wish they were included in solo mode – when placed regularly enough, the route to the next checkpoint is always visible on the map, making plotting a route to the finish far easier than when you're alone. How about a patch that lets us have these in single-player, EA?

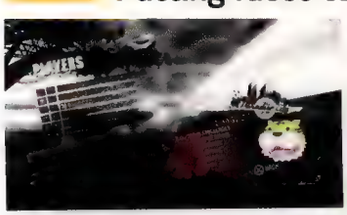
2 Car selection

When you're in charge, you can choose what cars your opposition drives. This makes it sound as if you can engineer things to create a massive advantage for yourself, but – rightly – not; you're restricted to selecting motors from the same licence grade. In other words, they'll have roughly the same abilities. And don't get excited – if a host picks a supercar for you, you don't get to keep it permanently. Once you quit the game, it's gone forever. Bah.

3 The final standings

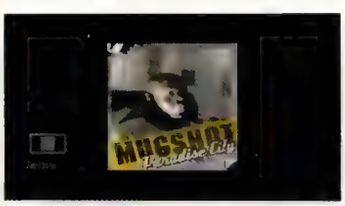
You can also select the amount of races you want to play and set up a tournament, choosing a different route for each contest. You can also save your favourite race routes to the hard drive and re-stage the event later on with different drivers. Wondering which of the above names we are? Why, we're Hollywood_8Horns, of cour... no, OK. We're Eggypops. (Tech probs meant we couldn't use the machine we're registered as PSM3uk on.) But, hey, fourth isn't too bad. Is it? Oh.

LINE-UP Putting faces to names



The Line-up option lets you see info about your online rivals. We like this guy – his tiger looks a bit like Hobbes from Calvin And Hobbes.

When you get a Takedown, you receive an image of the mug you just shafted – if he's got the Eye, it'll be an actual photo. Swish.

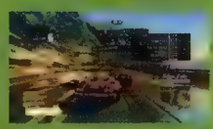


All your gathered Mugshots are saved to the hard drive for later viewing. It's quite the dream feature for collect-o-fetishists.

Online Highlights

Race report

1



2 And we're off – we, being the reckless fools we are, charge

3

4 We're motoring along, doing well. We're already dreaming of spraying cheap champagne around in victory when, all of a sudden... BANG. Cack.

5

Harshest insult

Trash talk from cyberspace

"Don't you even know left from right?"

Sheepseye_500

Community service

We'd kind of been expecting to find ourselves up against a load of whooping, hollering American fratboys – see the image you've cultivated for yourself over the years, *Burnout*? It's your own fault, what with your daft DJ [illegible] Come on guys, perk up a bit. Maybe drink some coffee.

Leaderboards

We weren't sure if this was just us – doesn't *that* make us sound professional? – but the Leaderboards only seemed to show those on our Friends list, no matter how many times we tried. Still, winning events earns points and sends you up the rankings.

ON THE DISC
Team Ico's next game will be

PLAYSTATION CLASSIC

Why Shadow Of The Colossus makes you glad to be sad

Dave Meikleham

Pub Sony
Dev Sony
FYI PS2 | 2005 | PSM69 91%
Kill massive titans with nothing but a sword in Sony's follow up to its enchanting hold-hand-athon, *Ico*.

In a game dominated by hundred-foot monsters, it's amazing how much the silent moments of *Shadow Of The Colossus* thrill. While the game boasts the most impressive boss battles on PS2, nothing takes your breath away like passing through a massive, empty valley the size of the Grand Canyon, looking up in awe as a seemingly never-ending bridge casts long, lonely shadows over a barren desert.

But then again, *Colossus* – the spiritual sequel to 2001's charming *Ico* – is all about going against the grain. This is a game about subtle, sparse narrative, undiluted atmosphere and, most of all, the guilt it makes you feel when you kill. There's no fanfare. No celebration. Just silence. Once you've brained a docile creature, often as cute and cuddly as a titanic Tickle Me Elmo, the remorse is more memorable than any headshot, Ollie or free kick.

Monsters, inc

The game begins with a nameless man riding on horseback through a desolate land, the dead body of a girl lying silently in his lap. It's a simple tale. Boy meets girl. Boy falls in love with girl. Girl dies. Boy gets told by mysterious disembodied voice – Dormin – that stabbing skyscraper-sized monsters to death is the only way resurrect girl. These titans are the Colossi. And you must seek out and destroy all sixteen of them with only Agro, your horse, for company.

EMAIL PSM3 @
What do you think of *Colossus*? Let us know:
psm3@futurenet.co.uk

A simple premise, then. Find big beastie. Kill big beastie. Each creature is like a giant platform section, and you use the acres of grass-like fur that clings to their bodies to clamber about. Once you find a way to clamber on, often a puzzle in itself, you then have to find several weak points on each beast and stab the stuffing out of them. You've only got a limited grip meter, though, and when that runs out you'll face some tense moments as you try to avoid huge falls that usually kill you.

The game constantly turns your expectations on their head, while the variety of the creatures and the tactics needed to beat them vary every time. Some

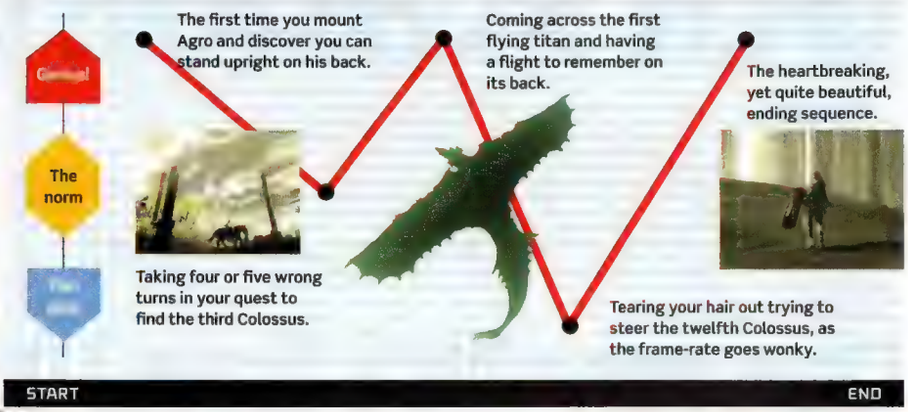
The defining moment...

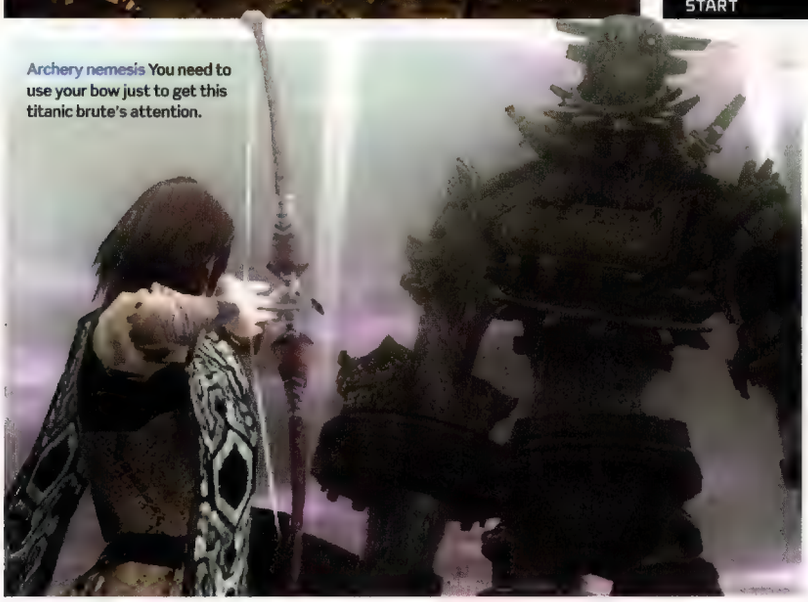
A wing and a prayer

There's no better example of the cinematic brilliance of *SOTC* than the battle against the thirteenth Colossus. As the beast flies gracefully overhead, you're forced to make an exhilarating leap of faith from your horse at full gallop onto its wing. It's a stunning moment, and the usually ethereal melodies of the score are replaced by an epic chorus even Star Wars composer John Williams would envy.

Santa claws There's nothing jolly about the eleventh Colossus – the most aggressive monster.

The *Shadow of the Colossus* thrill-o-graph


Gaming!
The norm
The first time you mount Agro and discover you can stand upright on his back.
Taking four or five wrong turns in your quest to find the third Colossus.
Coming across the first flying titan and having a flight to remember on its back.
Tearing your hair out trying to steer the twelfth Colossus, as the frame-rate goes wonky.
The heartbreaking, yet quite beautiful, ending sequence.
START
END



Archery nemesis You need to use your bow just to get this titanic brute's attention.

world perfectly recreates the thrill of exploration coupled with gripping loneliness you'll find in Nintendo's *Zelda* and *Metroid* games. Be it picking your way through the ruins of an ancient city, galloping across a mist-ridden swamp or walking through an eerily quiet, sun-kissed forest, you'll remember every step.

Colossus is far from perfect, however. The platforming feels imprecise. The frame-rate often frustrates. And the repetitive nature of hunt, kill, repeat, won't appeal to everyone. What it does offer, though, is character and, more than anything, soul. More than ever these days, the games industry uses graphs, checklists and committees to approve games and minimize risk. More games on the shelves test your trigger finger rather than your conscience and genuinely new ideas are rare as unicorn droppings, making *Colossus*'s bold concept and hauntingly reflective atmosphere stand out proudly. And in a market where the loudest, brashest games dominate, its silence is golden.

fights require careful timing and patience, while others need quick reflexes and leaps of faith. One encounter will pit you against a lumbering goliath with a club the size of Devon, the next a tussle with a speedy and erratic bull, barely bigger than your horse. What links most of these encounters, though, is how passive each beast is. Few – if not all – will attack without provocation, which makes you question your aggressive actions. And after each falls, all you're left with is regret.

Journeyman

Considering you spend most of the game just travelling to each Colossi, it's a relief that every journey is as unique as the battle that follows it. Holding your sword skywards creates a beam of light that points you in the general direction you need to go on your horse. It's fairly vague, mind, and often finding each boss hangs more on your own intuition and sense of direction than anything else, making you feel both free and vulnerable. The joy of moving through the

CLASSIC VERDICT

Why now? This is a close as games come to art And we're unlikely to see anything like it again.
Final thought More developers should show the kind of imagination and risk-taking of Team Ico.

The Top 5 *Colossus* facts

1 Mr Sandlerman
Adam Sandler can be seen playing the game in 2007's Reign Over Me.

2 What a Nimrod
Dormin, the demon lord, is an anagram of Nimrod – an ancient king. The Bible says Nimrod built the Tower Of Babel – the game's shrine of worship looks very similar.

3 Beast 17
The internet was rampant with rumours and shots of a winged creature, said to be a secret seventeenth Colossus. But it was all a hoax.

4 Memory bank
Use a memory card with *Ico* data when you play, and the mark on Agro's head is replaced by a horn, reminiscent of Ico's headwear.

5 Not so secret garden
Beat the game multiple times and your grip will be strong enough to climb the shrine of worship to the garden courtyard.

Outstanding offers

If you want something for almost nothing – and let's face it, who doesn't? – then pile your peepers on these PSM3-exclusive offers...

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From the guys who brought you THE 40-YEAR-OLD VIRGIN and KNOCKED UP
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15
DVD

Website Lovefilm.com is the largest and most extensive DVD rental service in the UK, delivering shiny movie discs right to your letterbox. Not only does the site have a stockpile of over 65,000 titles, but it even carries games. We've teamed up with Lovefilm to offer all PSM3 readers the chance to try the service for free for 30 days. There's no obligation to subscribe, but if you enjoy the service you can become a member by choosing one of the many rental packages available on the site. Prices start from £4.99 for a 'capped' package and £9.99 for an 'unlimited' package, which allows you to watch as many DVD's as your heart desires. There are never any late fees and postage is free both ways.

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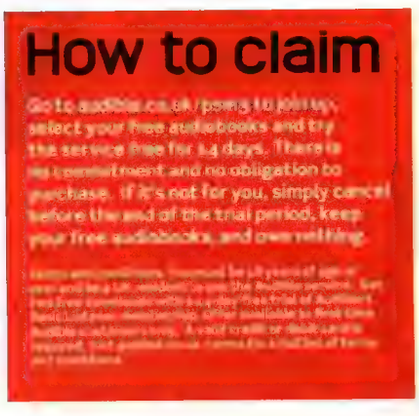
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Sick of completing games the day you get them? With SwapGame that needn't be a problem – it just adds to the efficiency – you simply pay £9.99 a month and keep any game for as long as you like. Plough through *Heavenly Sword* on a Saturday afternoon, spend a frantic weekend finishing off *Stranglehold*, or give yourself a leisurely fortnight to get that elusive Prestige Mode in *Call Of Duty 4*. There are no return dates or late fees, and with more than 4,000 releases to choose from you're bound to find something to play. We've teamed up with SwapGame to offer PSM3 readers an exclusive 30-day trial, so you've got plenty of time to try out the service before you decide whether or not to sign up – but, if you're anywhere near as good at games as we think you are, it'd be rude to do anything else. A huge catalogue of games are just waiting for you.

How to claim

For an exclusive 30-day free trial, simply visit swapgame.com/future and sign up using the following promotional code: FTP109

LISTEN!

Editor's choice mobile games

Get *Ratchet* free with MAD4Games

You know how it is – you're on a long train journey, bored out of your mind, no books to read, your iPod's out of battery and your friend is asleep. What do you do? Talk to your fellow passengers? Sign up to MAD4Games, and on the day PSM3 is published they'll charge you just £3 and send you a link for the best mobile phone game released that month. This month, it's the stunning platformer *Ratchet & Clank*, shrunk to 2D but still rammed with the typical *Ratchet* humour, fun and gameplay that we all love.

So if you're ever preparing for a big trip, or just need something to while away the hours waiting for buses or aeroplanes, load up your phone with *Ratchet & Clank* for just £3 – and immerse yourself in this new adventure from one of videogaming's greatest icons. You can't lose. Well, unless you drop your phone afterwards and break it.

How to claim

To sign up to this offer text 'PSM3' to 63344. If you have any problems, then text 'HELP' plus details of the problem to 63344.

ON THE DISC
Check out the PS3 reviews section for the latest games

PS3 Playlist

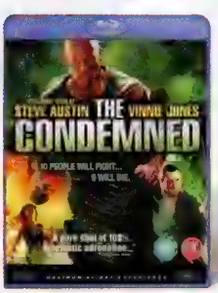
	FIRST CHOICE	SECOND CHOICE	THIRD CHOICE
ROLE-PLAYING GAMES	**THE ELDER SCROLLS 4: OBLIVION** **Pub** Ubisoft	**Dev** Bethesda **Web** elderscrolls.com "Not so much a game as an entire world, one where you define what it means to you as you go. Incredible." **PSM3 Rating** 93%	**DISGAEA 3** **Pub** Nippon Ichi | **Dev** Nippon Ichi | **Web** nisamerica.com "A fantastic cerebral workout. A consuming, entertaining and unique entry into PS3's RPG catalogue." **PSM3 Rating** 83%	**FOLKLORE** **Pub** Sony | **Dev** Game Republic **Web** us.playstation.com/folklore "We have the hots for its environments and originality, but it's a little lightweight next to the likes of *Final Fantasy*." **PSM3 Rating** 69%
PS STORE	**WARHAWK** **Pub** Sony | **Dev** Incognito **Web** warhawk.com "The perfect showcase for the PlayStation Network. Rich, rewarding and exciting. Get it." **PSM3 Rating** 90%	**BLAST FACTOR** **Pub** Sony | **Dev** Sony | **Web** us.playstation.com "Plays similarly to *Geometry Wars*, but has enough neat tricks to elevate it beyond mere mimicry. Excellent." **PSM3 Rating** 85%	**TEKKEN: DARK RESURRECTION** **Pub** Sony | **Dev** Namco Bandai **Web** tekken-official.jp "The moves are as easily-accessible as they were on PSP. Playing it again reminds us just how good it is." **PSM3 Rating** 84%
PARTY	**GUITAR HERO 3** **Pub** Activision | **Dev** Neversoft **Web** guitarherogame.com "Nothing tops the feeling of switching your brain off and letting your fingers fly over the fretboard." **PSM3 Rating** 90%	**ROCK BAND** **Pub** EA | **Dev** Harmonix | **Web** rockband.com "No-one can resist, from folk who don't normally play games to the crazy neighbour downstairs. It's brilliant." **PSM3 Rating** 88%	**SINGSTAR** **Pub** Sony | **Dev** Sony | **Web** singstargame.com "Record yourself dancing to Britney or shuffling to Radiohead, then upload your best performances. The complete package." **PSM3 Rating** 81%
BEAT-'EM-UPS	**VIRTUA FIGHTER 5** **Pub** Sega | **Dev** AM2 | **Web** sega.com "Technically flawless, but it's not essential. It's *Virtua Fighter* – it hasn't really changed much over the years." **PSM3 Rating** 87%	**TEKKEN: DARK RESURRECTION** **Pub** Sony | **Dev** Namco Bandai | **Web** tekken-official.jp "It's the PSP version, but in hi-def. As a cheap download, we can't do anything but recommend it." **PSM3 Rating** 84%	**WWE SMACKDOWN VS RAW 2008** **Pub** THQ | **Dev** Yuke's | **Web** smackdownvsraw.com "Fun, glitzy and with an impressive number of match types, but the next-gen varnish doesn't cover up the cracks." **PSM3 Rating** 79%

Out now on Blu-ray Movies for your PS3

GAME-MOVIE

Resident Evil: Extinction

Stars Milla Jovovich, Oded Fehr
Web sonypictures.com
The usual Resi formula of T-Viruses (virii?), zombies and underwhelming shooting, set in a post-apocalyptic desert. Passable enough, just, but the image quality isn't what we expect from Blu-ray, and there aren't enough extras either.



VIOLENT

The Condemned

Stars 'Stone Cold' Steve Austin
Web watchthemdielive.com
Yes, it's ex-WWE champion Stone Cold Steve Austin and Vinnie Jones – what a dream team, eh? Ten convicts are put into a 'kill or be killed' contest. Last survivor wins. It's a bit muff, really. Lots of good extras, though, including a 38-minute Making Of.

GRUESOME

Saw 4

Stars Tobin Bell, Costas Mandylor
Web officialsaw.com
Oh, you know the drill by now. Lots of people are murdered in grisly ways, blood flies, you yawn and remember how good the first Saw was compared to this. If you want to see a brain undergo autopsy in hi-def, mind, this is for you. Stacks of bonus bits too.

Disagree with our scores? Mail your angry rants or alternative reviews and Top Tens to: psm3@futurenet.co.uk. Subject line: "PS3 Top Ten!"

Back Issues
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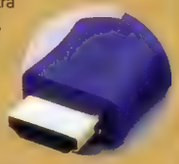
PS3 For Beginners

New to PS3? Read this now

Composite? SCART? HDMI? I'm confused... do I need an expensive TV?
Yes. Anyone running PS3 through a standard def (i.e. old) TV is missing out on just how good games can look. You need a good 16:9 (i.e. widescreen) TV with an HDMI input. That's better than any kind of composite and SCART connection. If it's running at least 1080i/720p, that means that the TV is officially 'hi-def'. PS3 *can* output up to 1080p resolution (i.e. show even more pixels), so you could shell out the extra for a TV that can handle it, but only a few games use 1080p and you can't see the difference unless you set two TVs side by side.



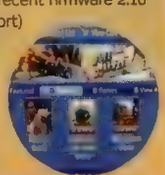
Why is Blu-ray so good?
Blu-ray is the best reason to spring for that 1080p set. All Blu-ray movies play at 1080p – the highest resolution you can get. Do you *need* Blu-ray? That's debatable now that PS3 can 'upscale' (i.e. run at hi-res) your old DVDs. Many 'old' DVDs that were well recorded look superb on PS3, meaning that re-buying your old movies on Blu-ray is a dubious use of cash. Still, in side-by-side comparisons Blu-ray does look sharper than DVD.

How do I connect to the net?
Simply select 'yes' to everything in your Internet Connection (under 'Settings') and PS3 should find the net and be up and running. Any problems, just phone your internet service provider and tell them you've got a PS3 – you'll need to know the primary and secondary DNS numbers they use. Choose 'Manual' rather than 'Auto' and tap these into the settings.

How do I add Friends?
Like any good party, the trick is being invited. Your PS Network ID is the key here. Tell this to a friend and they can send you a Friend Request message from their PS3. The friend request will then appear on your PS3. Simply say 'Yes' and both of you will have icons for each other on your machines. Now sending a message is just a click away, as is the ability to see when their PS3 is switched on and what they're playing.

How do I download stuff from the store?
The PS Store is in your PS3's Network menu. Select this for many free and reasonably priced downloads. We find the best way to keep abreast of what's hot is to check the 'Recent Additions' and 'Top Downloads' charts on the right of the front page. Simply click on them to start the download. Then choose 'Perform In Background' to do other things on your PS3 while they download. Sadly you can't yet play movies or games while downloading, but you can still surf the net without pausing the process.

How do I play music and video on my PS3?
All music and video appears on the Music and Video menus. Simple. Insert a CD and you can rip it to your hard drive from the Music menu. Video is slightly tougher – but the recent firmware 2.10 update (featuring DivX support) has improved things. Movies no longer have to be in MP4 format, since most .avi and .wmv files now play too. Handy, since they're the most popular types of video files on the net.



High Definition TVs

Updated: the best TVs for PS3 gaming – to suit any budget

£400 - £700

Sony KDL-20S3020
A touch over 400 quid (£445, to be exact) is a very fair price indeed for a more than decent 20-inch TV. It might not be the biggest, but it packs a punch technically, and even features that all-important HDMI socket.
Also recommended: 32" Evesham ALQEMI 32SX, £600, 20" Philips 20PF5320D (£500).

£700 - £1000

JVC LT-32DA8BJ
An excellent-value mid-range TV, this. Integrated TV receiver, HDMI ports, two SCART sockets and 3D cinema sound all contribute to making this a box you can be proud of having in the corner of your living room. £700 for a 32-inch TV can't be bad. And it'll be cheaper online.
Also recommended: Panasonic Viera TX-32LXD700 (£650), 32" Toshiba 32WLT68 (£700).

£1000 - £2000

Samsung LE46F86BDX
A £1500 1080p LCD that out-performs its equivalent plasma rivals, using Samsung's DNIe processing for rich blacks and fine detail with 100Hz processing to minimise blur from fast moving images. It's got three HDMI slots and Colour Enhancer too.
Also recommended: 42" Sharp Aquos (£1,900), 47" Toshiba 47WLT66 (£1,900).

Tech-tips Send us your tech questions and tips. Email psm3@futurenet.co.uk. Subject line: "Tech Tips"

How to... get DVD themes

How to use the PS3 themes from our coverdisc

1
Disc head Insert our disc into your computer, hi-def side upwards. It contains all the themes.
2
Stick offf Copy all the themes you want onto a USB memory stick.
3
Theme swoon And you should be able to install your themes from the System menu. This here is the lovely *Okami* one. Pretty, ain't it?
CLOVER STUDIO

Just in case you missed our guide last month to getting your PS3 themes (special backgrounds for your PS3 desktop) from our coverdisc – or have been unable to open your free book due to an 'incident' with a hot cup of bovril and a jam sandwich – we're going to go over it again.

First, get a USB memory stick and put it into your PC/Mac. Open it, right-click on the background and select 'Create new folder'. Call this folder PS3 and, within it, create another folder called THEME. Yes, in capital letters.

Next, take our DVD and insert it into your PC or Mac. Find the PS3 Themes folder, and select the ones you want – all the file names end in '.pt3'. Then copy these over to the THEME folder on your USB stick, and remove it from your computer.

Turn on your PS3 and insert your memory stick. Locate the System menu in the cross-media bar and select 'Themes'. Choose 'Install' and 'Select USB device'. The themes should begin to install. Sometimes the themes are incorrectly named and appear as the word 'SAMPLE', but they should still work.

And that's it – we're a bit partial to the *Okami* theme, all told.

ON THE DISC
Want to see the latest PS2 games rated? Go here

PS2 Playlist

	FIRST CHOICE	SECOND CHOICE	THIRD CHOICE
BEAT-'EM-UPS	**SOUL CALIBUR II** **Pub** Namco | **Dev** Namco | **Web** soulcalibur.com "You can pull off highly impressive moves without memorising long sequences. A great fighting game." **PSM3 Rating** 93%	**TEKKEN 5** **Pub** Namco | **Dev** Namco | **Web** tekken5.namco.com "It's faster. It's nastier. It's 'blink-when-you're hit' gruesome stuff where you pay big for mistakes." **PSM3 Rating** 91%	**HYPER STREET FIGHTER 2** **Pub** Capcom | **Dev** Capcom | **Web** capcom.com "Every button press has an effect, every risk brings glorious reward or ignominious failure." **PSM3 Rating** 89%
	87%	80%	87%	86%	85%
ADVENTURE	**OKAMI** **Pub** Capcom | **Dev** Clover **Web** capcom.com "You're restoring nature and helping people. Why can't all PS2 games be this beautiful?" **PSM3 Rating** 95%	**ICO** **Pub** SCEI | **Dev** Team Ico **Web** icothegame.com "The saddest, most tragic story on PS2, but also an achingly beautiful one. *Ico* teases out genuine emotion." **PSM3 Rating** 93%	**SHADOW OF THE COLOSSUS** **Pub** SCEI | **Dev** SCEI **Web** shadowofthecolossus.com Climb 200ft beasts and plunge swords into their brains. An awe-inspiring experience." **PSM3 Rating** 91%
	80%	82%	80%	80%	87%
PUZZLERS	**FANTAVISION** **Pub** SCEI | **Dev** SCEI | **Web** playstation.com "Pump fireworks into the air, join them together and set them off. Stands up next to *Tetris*." **PSM3 Rating** 85%	**SUPER MONKEY BALL DELUXE** **Pub** Sega | **Dev** Sega **Web** sega.com/gamesite/smbdx "A *Marble Madness* clone except you're a monkey trapped in a ball – which is much better." **PSM3 Rating** 84%	**SUPER BUST-A-MOVE** **Pub** Acclaim | **Dev** Taito | **Web** n/a "Puzzle insanity that's super-slick, extremely addictive and easy to get into. Check it out." **PSM3 Rating** 78%
	85%	78%	71%	77%
STRATEGY/ MANAGEMENT	**LMA MANAGER 2006** **Pub** Codemasters | **Dev** Codemasters | **Web** codemasters.co.uk "If you fancy updating your team after the transfer window, *LMA* gives you an online option. A superb idea." **PSM3 Rating** 85%	**THE SIMS** **Pub** EA | **Dev** Maxis **Web** thesims.ea.com "Mum leaves clothes everywhere, soils herself, plays rap music and refuses to do any cleaning. Fun." **PSM3 Rating** 85%	**KESSEN III** **Pub** Koei | **Dev** Koei | **Web** koei.co.uk "There's a real sense of scale and the battlefield feels alive with movement and mass conflict. Excellent." **PSM3 Rating** 82%
	80%	70%	80%	80%	80%

A glance at Clancy

A set of Tom Clancy games, for your pleasure

FUTURISTIC

GRAW2

Pub Ubisoft | **Dev** Ubisoft
Web ghostrecon.us.ubi.com
There's massive tactical depth here, albeit depth rammed with pro-US military madness. GRAW2 takes us to the future, but the year 2014 is as full of deserts and terrorists as 2007. Still, a terrific squad shooter.
PSM3 Rating 86%

DECEPTION

Splinter Cell: Double Agent

Pub Ubisoft | **Dev** Ubisoft
Web splintercell.com
The games of Sam Fisher are showing their age. Despite the 'work for two sides' dynamic of *Double Agent*, it's all a little bit 'functional'. Expect Snake to put Sam in his place soon. Again.
PSM3 Rating 75%

THICK

Rainbow Six 4: Lockdown

Pub Ubisoft | **Dev** Ubisoft
Web rainbowsixgame.us.com
Possibly the least-good of the generally decent *Rainbow Six* games, this is an OK squad shooter let down by some rubbish AI and an even slower pace than usual.
PSM3 Rating 68%

Disagree with our choices? Write us an explosive mail telling us why we're complete idiots. Lob your word bombs at: psm3@futurenet.co.uk. Subject line: "WRONG!"

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Why didn't anyone buy...?

They released it... No-one bought it. We explain

Romance Of The Three Kingdoms 8

Pub Koei | **Dev** Koei | **Web** kongming.net/8

Fancy a really ugly top-down strategy game with masses of menus where your ultimate goal is the unification of ancient China? One set in the same universe as the lamentable *Dynasty Warriors*, and the eighth in a series of games based on an 800,000 word Chinese novel? You don't? But *why*?

Do try (difficult, we know) not to let the drier-than-crispbread subject matter put you off, though; *Romance Of The Three Kingdoms 8* is a compelling game once you get properly immersed in it. Sure, that takes time – you've got to learn to navigate the menus, work out the relevance of the billion statistics and find out just what those thousands of icons are actually for – but once you've done it, you'll be leaping up the army rankings like a kangaroo in a tin hat.

In *ROTTK8*, you see, you win by going up in the ranks, so gaining more influence. Chiefs, for instance, can control their own army, but have no say in the running of entire cities. You'll need to win battles for that – which are, of course, entirely controlled through really text-heavy menus. Hope you like a good read.

There have been three more *Romance* titles on PS2 since, but none in the UK after number eight flopped – although more are rumoured. But if you want something with enough depth to drown yourself in, this will keep you going forever.

EMAIL PSM3 @
Want to champion a game here? Let us know.
psm3@futurenet.co.uk

PlayStation 3 Top 20

This month's big retail winners and losers

Want it? Tick it!

01		**Burnout Paradise**	EA **Reviewed** PSM97 89%
02	(02)	**Call Of Duty 4**	Activision **Reviewed** PSM95 94%
03	(01)	**Assassin's Creed**	Ubisoft **Reviewed** PSM96 89%
04	(03)	**Uncharted: Drake's Fortune**	Sony **Reviewed** PSM94 89%
05	(05)	**Pro Evolution Soccer 2008**	Konami **Reviewed** PSM93 86%
06	(04)	**FIFA 08**	EA **Reviewed** PSM94 63%
07	(07)	**Kane & Lynch**	Eidos **Reviewed** PSM95 58%
08	(06)	**Need For Speed ProStreet**	EA **Reviewed** PSM95 79%
09	(11)	**Ratchet: Tools Of Destruction**	Sony **Reviewed** PSM93 93%
10		**Resistance: Fall Of Man**	Sony **Reviewed** PSM86 89%
11	(08)	**Medal Of Honor: Airborne**	EA **Reviewed** PSM96 69%
12	(10)	**Guitar Hero 3**	Activision **Reviewed** PSM95 90%
13	(13)	**SingStar**	Sony **Reviewed** PSM93 81%
14	RE	**Warhawk**	Sony **Reviewed** PSM92 90%
15	RE	**MotorStorm**	Sony **Reviewed** PSM86 88%
16	(14)	**The Simpsons Game**	EA **Reviewed** PSM95 70%
17	RE	**Rainbow Six Vegas**	Ubisoft **Reviewed** PSM90 76%
18	(16)	**The Orange Box**	EA **Reviewed** PSM96 90%
19	(17)	**Stranglehold**	Midway **Reviewed** PSM93 78%
20	(09)	**Smackdown Vs Raw 2008**	THQ **Reviewed** PSM94 79%

Paradise found

Cynics might suggest *Paradise* has profited by being one of very few games out in January, but no matter; this is yet another absolutely tremendous *Burnout*.

The rise of *Fall Of Man*

It's back – *Resistance*'s reappearance must be down to all those who got PS3s for Christmas stocking up on games. So if you're new to PSM3, hello there.

D'oh for it

The Simpsons Game is another to have benefitted from Xmas, and so is still lurking around the charts. It's funny, but as a game? Well, it's not all that, is it?

2,000,000

Surprise – that's how many copies *Daxter* on PSP has shifted. Who would have thought it would do so well?

You're playing...

Steven Dew
Steven's playing *Call Of Duty*, same as everyone else.

1 **Uncharted** "This game is the best on PS3 at the moment and has graphics even Bill Gates will envy."
2 **Call Of Duty 4** "This is the best out of the series and is so powerful and action packed that the ending will make you weep."
3 **Resistance** "A great FPS – this is PS3's *Halo*, only better."

We're playing...

Andrew Kelly
It's a trip to the past for resident emosexual Andy.

1 **Parasite Eve 2** " A PSone classic. Blends CG with gorgeous pre-rendered backgrounds. Ace."
2 **Call Of Duty 4** "Still playing it online. New favourite thing; grenade launcher attachment."
3 **Rock Band** "Been exploring the unsigned bands. Pleasure (Pleasure) by Bang Camaro? Skill."

They're playing...

Kevin Mason
The lead designer on *SingStar* tells us what tops his charts.

1 **Ratchet & Clank** "On my second playthrough. Loving powering up my weapons."
2 **Oblivion** "160 hours in and I've still barely touched the main quest. A ridiculously good game."
3 **Call Of Duty 4** "Incredibly tense and atmospheric missions. A really immersive game."

ON THE DISC
See what PSP games are coming your way

PSP Playlist

	FIRST CHOICE	SECOND CHOICE	THIRD CHOICE

DRIVING

OUTRUN 2006: COAST 2 COAST
Pub Sega | **Dev** Sumo Digital | **Web** outrun2006.com

"Sheer magical fun, from its ridiculous slides to its stupidly colourful graphics. The most fun you'll have had in ages."
PSM3 Rating 89%

84%

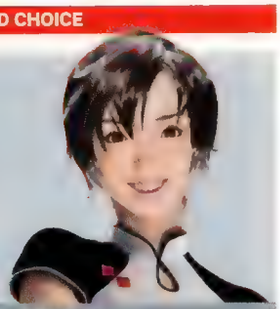
BURNOUT LEGENDS
Pub EA | **Dev** Team Fusion | **Web** ea.com

"The best bits of *Burnout* 1, 2 and 3 on your PSP. How good is that? Bloody good. Brilliant, edgy and massively fast."
PSM3 Rating 92%

87%

RIDGE RACER
Pub SCEI | **Dev** Namco
Web namco.com

"It's hard to imagine a better showcase for PSP's capabilities than *Ridge Racer*."
PSM3 Rating 88%



80%

PLATFORMERS

RATCHET AND CLANK: SIZE MATTERS
Pub Sony | **Dev** High Impact | **Web** us.playstation.com

"Beautiful and frantic – an eye-to-brain feast that's luxuriously realised."
PSM3 Rating 86%

69%

DAXTER
Pub SCEE | **Dev** Ready at Dawn
Web naughtydog.com

"Looks and plays so much like *Jak 2* that it's a bit unnerving. Go and get it."
PSM3 Rating 86%

75%

MEGAMAN POWERED UP
Pub Capcom | **Dev** Capcom
Web megaman.co.uk

"Monstrously hard and requires the dexterity of a cyborg concert pianist. Playable stuff."
PSM3 Rating 78%

71%

SPORTS

VIRTUA TENNIS WORLD TOUR
Pub Sega | **Dev** Sumo Digital | **Web** sega.com

"Design your own player, play tournaments across the globe, win trophies, earn cash... now that's tennis. A smash."
PSM3 Rating 91%

80%

FIGHT NIGHT ROUND 3
Pub EA | **Dev** EA
Web easports.com/fightnightround3

"Streamlining has taken place, but *Round 3* remains a well-balanced slugfest and deserves the championship belt."
PSM3 Rating 84%

79%

EVERYBODY'S GOLF
Pub SCEI | **Dev** SCEI
Web playstation.com

"Your caddy squeaks 'nice shot' and your golfer does a backflip. It's all very charming."
PSM3 Rating 81%

80%

SHOOTERS/ SHOOT-'EM-UPS

KILLZONE: LIBERATION
Pub Sony | **Dev** Guerilla | **Web** killzone.com

"The FPS has been ditched for a friendly 3D set-up. A massively enjoyable blaster that suits your PSP perfectly."
PSM3 Rating 85%

77%

SOCOM: FIRETEAM BRAVO
Pub SCEE | **Dev** Zipper | **Web** socom-game.com

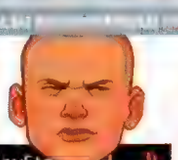
"*Fireteam Bravo* not only looks lush on the tiny screen, it handles like a dream as well. A seamless experience."
PSM3 Rating 83%

78%

PARODIUS PORTABLE
Pub Konami | **Dev** Konami | **Web** konami.com

"*Parodius* and its four sequels. Contains space penguins and aubergine-spouting mountains. Madness, really."
PSM3 Rating 81%

70%



Lab testing Three top PlayStation laboratories

MONKEY BUSINESS

Leisure Suit Larry: Magna Cum Laude
Pub Vivendi | **Dev** High Voltage
Web leisuresuitlarry.com

Larry's uni's science lab looks perfectly normal. Apart from the hot teacher. And the hyper-intelligent masturbating monkey. And the brain-swapping machine. What does this button do? Uh-oh...
PSM3 Rating 80%

RUN, RABBIT

Whiplash
Pub Eidos | **Dev** Crystal Dynamics
Web eidosinteractive.com

It's an animal testing lab, in a platform game starring (ggngh) Spank the weasel and Redmond the rabbit, who are chained together. They want to escape, obviously, and embark on a 'madcap' adventure as they seek their freedom. Passable, but little else.
PSM3 Rating 72%

BUTTON-BASHING

Canis Canem Edit
Pub Rockstar | **Dev** Rockstar
Web rockstargames.com/canis

We kind of wish our own science lessons had been this easy. Jimmy tips beakers of bubbling liquid into containers, as you jab buttons in a rhythm-action style. Utterly simple, although you wouldn't want to be on the receiving end when it goes wrong.
PSM3 Rating 93%

Disagree with our choices? Write an explosive mail telling us why we're complete idiots. Lob your word bombs at psm3@futurenet.co.uk. Subject line: "WRONG!"

Nice Apps

Trick up your console

Key glee

App PS3 keyboard adapter
Web totalconsole.com

Sure, you can plug USB keyboards into your PS3 for online chat, but you can't use them to play games on. This little adaptor solves that problem, though, mapping the DualShock 3/Sixaxis buttons to the keyboard and mouse. There's a couple of bad points, however – it doesn't actually work on PS2 games, for a start, and worse is how much it costs. It's a pretty substantial 50 quid, and while we think this is a neat idea we don't think it's worth that much outlay. Sure, it might give you a marginal advantage on *Unreal 3*, but, ultimately, we're happy to stick with the DualShock.

Heads up

App Bluetooth headset
Web madcatz.com

Curiously, this Bluetooth headset, so perfect for communicating with your buddies during Team Deathmatches on *Call Of Duty 4*, actually tries to sell itself by saying on the packaging it "works great with *Madden 08* and *GRAW2*". You can't help feeling Mad Catz have stared so far into the gift horse's mouth they could tell you what its tonsils look like. Never mind, though, because this does work very well indeed – we use it ourselves to play *CoD4* against each other at home, and have invented several new swear words in the process. Worth it.

Gold pedal

App Guitar Hero pedals
Web bestbuy.com

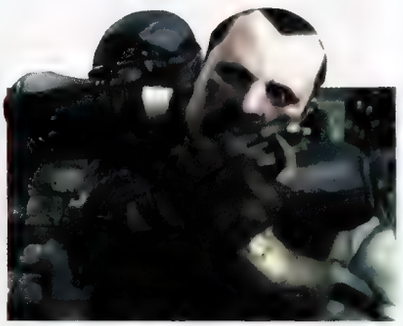
Guitar Hero has always been missing one thing – guitar pedals. Fret (there's a funny joke there somewhere) no longer, though – you can now get these. One controls Star Power, the other the whammy bar – leaving your fingers free for the strumming. Useful.

Early Warning System

Your PlayStation release schedule*

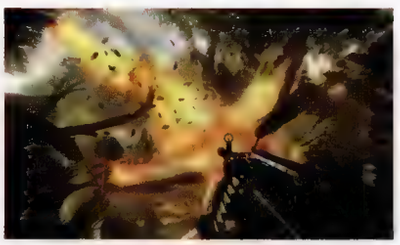
Game	Publisher	Out	Format	Want it? Tick it!
Condemned 2	Sega	March 14	PS3	☐
Ferrari Challenge	System 3	March 14	PS3	☐
Rainbow Six Vegas 2	Ubisoft	March 14	PS3	☐
FlatOut: Head On	Empire	March 14	PSP	☐
Dark Sector	[illegible]	March 28	[illegible]	☐
Everybody's Golf: World Tour	Sony	March 28	PS3	☐
Sega Superstars Tennis	Sega	March 28	PS3	☐
Race Driver: GRID	Codemasters	March	PS3	☐
Brothers In Arms: Hell's Highway	Ubisoft	March	PS3	☐
Viking: Battle For Asgard	Sega	March	PS3	☐
God Of War: Chains Of Olympus	Sony	March	PSP	☐
The Spiderwick Chronicles	Activision Blizzard	March	PS2	☐
Gran Turismo 5 Prologue	Sony	April 17	PS3	☐
UEFA Euro 2008	EA	April 18	PS3	☐
Far Cry 2	[illegible]	April 25	[illegible]	☐
Grand Theft Auto IV	Rockstar	April 29	PS3	☐
TNA Impact	Midway	May 2	PS3	☐
Iron Man	Sega	May 2	PS3	☐
Battlefield: Bad Company	EA	May	PS3	☐
Bionic Commando	Capcom	May	PS3	☐
Golden Axe	Sega	May	PS3	☐
Midnight Club LA	Rockstar	May	PS2	☐
Star Wars: The Force Unleashed	Activision Blizzard	May	PS3	☐
Lego Indiana Jones	Activision Blizzard	May	PS3	☐
Heist	Codemasters	June 27	PS3	☐
Alone In The Dark	Atari	June	PS3	☐
Prototype	Activision Blizzard	June	PS3	☐
Wet	Activision Blizzard	June	PS3	☐
Top Spin 3	2K Sports	June	PS3	☐
Lego Batman	Warner Bros	July	PS3	☐
Metal Gear Solid 4	Konami	Summer	PS3	☐
The Bourne Conspiracy	Activision Blizzard	August	PS3	☐
LittleBigPlanet	Sony	Sep	PS3	☐
Final Fantasy XIII	[illegible]	Sep	[illegible]	☐
Tekken 6	Sony	Sep	PS3	☐
Tomb Raider Underworld	Eidos	Oct	PS3	☐
Brutal Legend	Activision Blizzard	Oct	PS3	☐
Mercenaries 2	EA	TBC	PS3	☐
Haze	Ubisoft	TBC	PS3	☐
Killzone 2	Sony	TBC	PS3	☐

*Caution: all dates are accurate at time of press but liable to drastic change



Dark Sector

D3's previously low profile *Resi 4* clone surprises everyone with its stunning visuals – a worthy purchase, betrayed only by patchy level design.



Far Cry 2

Looks quite phenomenal, but can it play just as beautifully? We're leaning towards 'yes', but more extensive hands-on time will soon confirm it.

Final Fantasy XIII

We should be getting more news on the latest *FF* very soon indeed. We can't wait for another stonking RPG to properly compete with *Oblivion*.

eBay Going, Going, Gone PlayStation auction action

Assassin's Creed knives

Yes, you could be the proud, clearly well-adjusted owner of a set of *Assassin's Creed* throwing knives. Except they're not real blades, fortunately; they're cast from white resin and are strictly for Cosplay purposes. At least one of these knives, mind you, appears to be a huge great sword instead. Eek.

Sold $5 **Original Price** $5
Profit None

Killer7 'survival kit'

This is a bit like a Swiss army knife, but instead of a corkscrew and a tin-opener, you've got a whistle, magnifying glass, thermometer, compass and pen-torch. What this has to do with *Killer7* we don't know, but since when has developer Suda 51 cared about sense?

Sold No **Original Price** $2.95
Profit None

Pyramid Head outfit

Off to a fancy dress party? Why not go as Pyramid Head? You can tell people you've come dressed as a manifestation the guilt you're feeling after killing your wife, and see what sort of looks you get and how many minutes it'll be until you're sitting in a prison cell. On second thoughts, maybe not.

Sold No **Original Price** $30.00
Profit None

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PX76256 Sylvia Saint	PX75427 Girl Love XXX	PX76521 Urban Angel	PX75981 Carmen Electra	PX76219 Paris Vid 2			PX76345 Alaura Eden	PX75932	PX78370 Perfect lez	PX76156 Leilani in pool
PX75918 Great Rack	PX75786 Mature with experience	PX75632 Fondling Friends	PX75091 1st timer	PX76421 Climax	PX76304 Dirty Girl	PX76348 Hannah Harper	PX79445	PX76228 Devilishly hot	PX78947 Hot Sex	PX77813 Michelle Marsh red hot
PX79436	PX75626 2 girls	PX75746 Bed time	PX76367 Jenna Jameson	PX79443	PX76418 Tight package	PX76406 Naughty!!	PX76283 Hot action	PX77555 Lacey Stacey		
PX78941 Sucked	PX75407 Home alone	PX76824 Poolside romp	PX76509 Shower action	PX75866 Extra handful	PX76365 Sexy beast	PX79444	PX78357 Bath lez	PX78039 Emily Scott vid		

STAR GAME

PJ86224 VIRTUAL GIRLFRIEND

GAMES

PJ85031 KAMASUTRA sexplosion

PJ85635

PJ86240 SWAT ELITE TROOPS

PJ86129

PJ85900

PJ86282

PJ86121

PJ85941 Laura

PJ86059

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PJ86013

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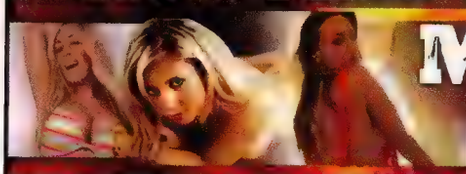

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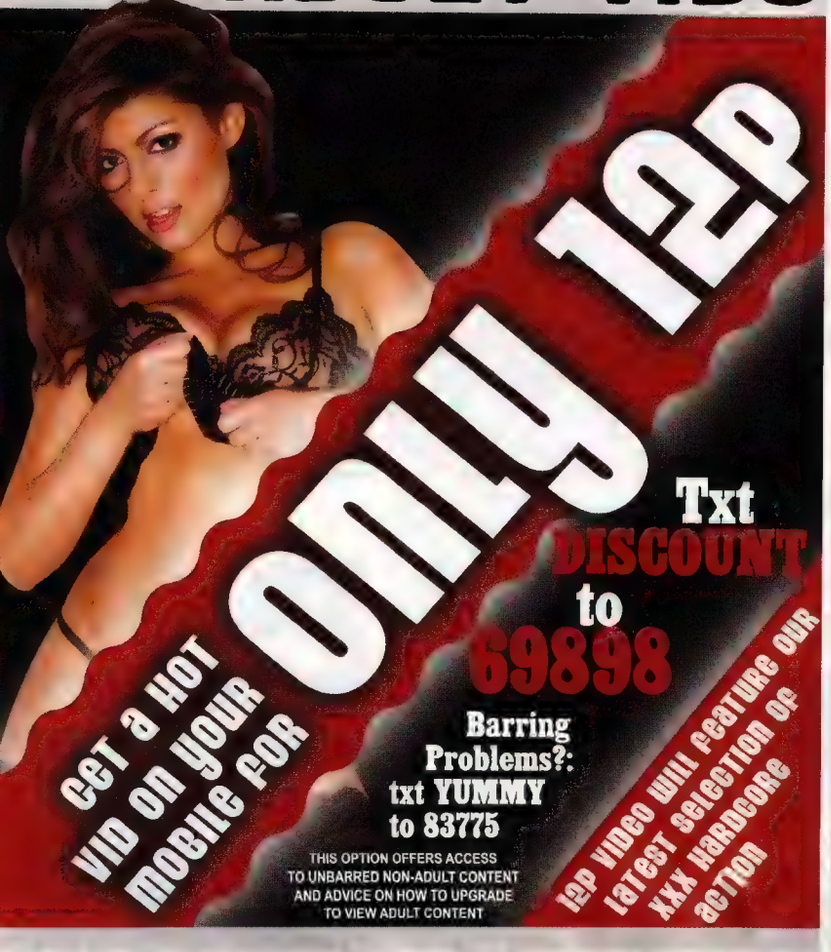

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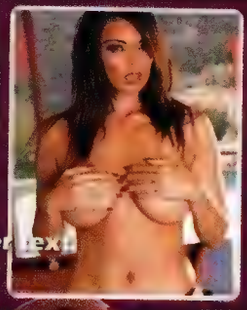

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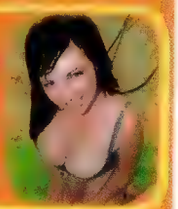

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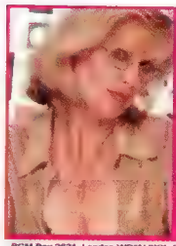

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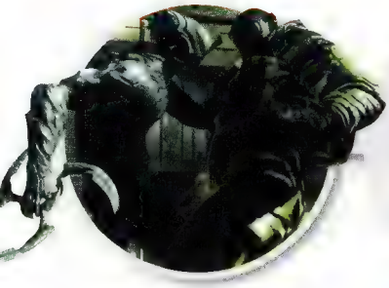
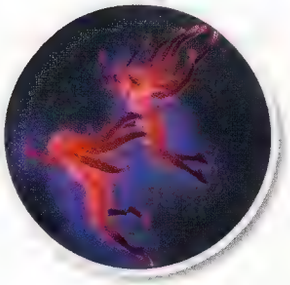


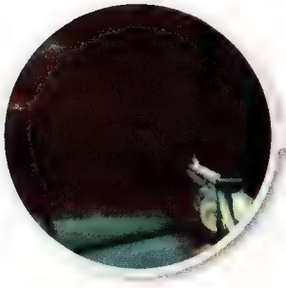
Dark Sector shows off PS3's power
"One of the best-looking games on PS3. Full stop."
page 18

Lego Indy is yet another game we can't wait for
"We can pretty much guarantee this is going to rock"
page 30

You don't want to move to Metro City
"Inhabited solely by drunks, tramps, junkies and murderers"
page 64



DMC4's Dagon is a cunning beast
"He uses a pair of glowing lesbians to lure prey"
page 86



Splitters 3's bursting scientists are still brilliant
"Explodes in a fountain of blood and guts - eurgh..."
page 92

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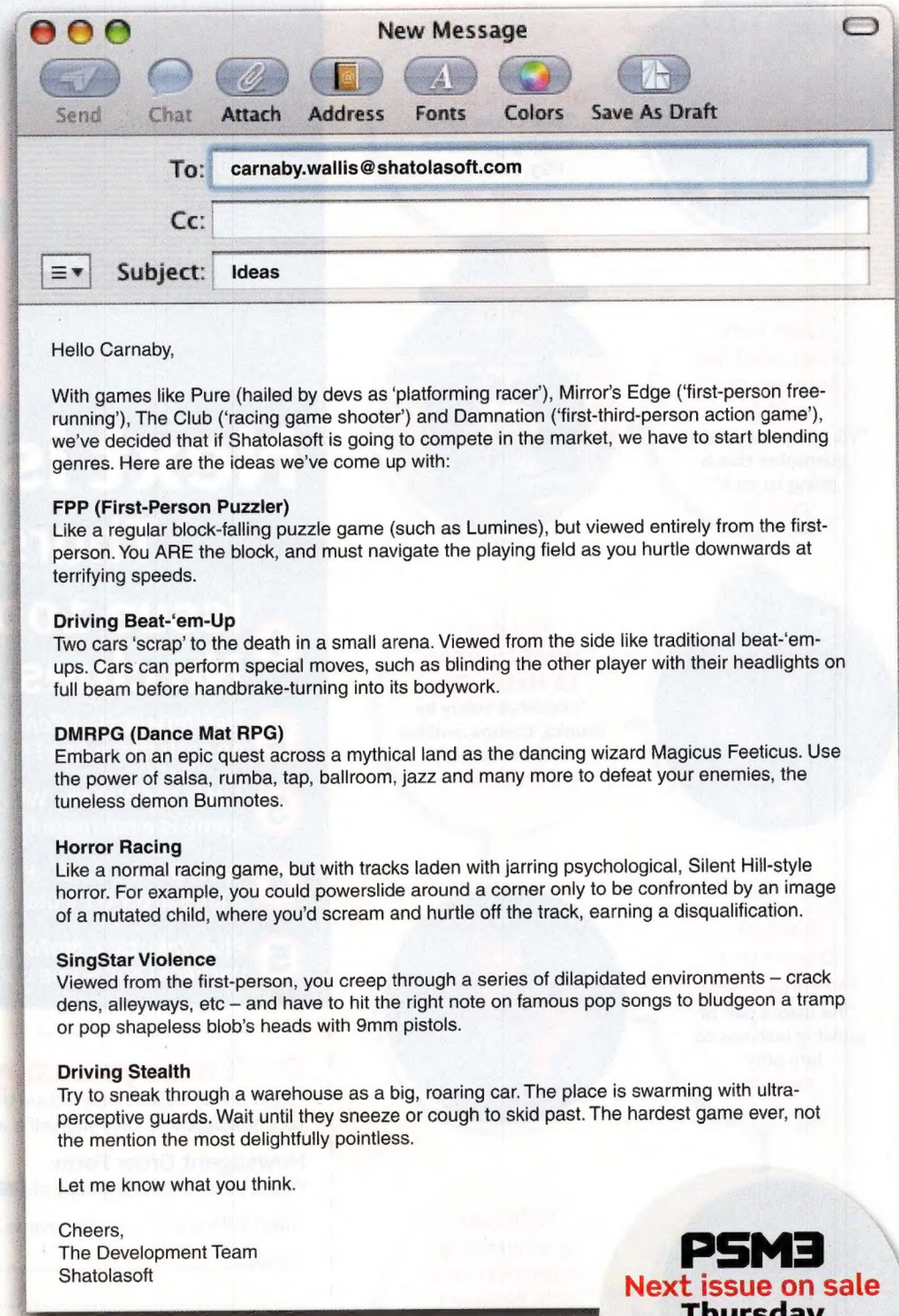
"It's a platform-dance-strategy-RPG-'em-up!"

How genre-splicing is REVOLUTIONARY – a leaked memo



Hello Carnaby,

With games like Pure (hailed by devs as 'platforming racer'), Mirror's Edge ('first-person free-running'), The Club ('racing game shooter') and Damnation ('first-third-person action game'), we've decided that if Shatolasoft is going to compete in the market, we have to start blending genres. Here are the ideas we've come up with:

FPP (First-Person Puzzler)
Like a regular block-falling puzzle game (such as Lumines), but viewed entirely from the first-person. You ARE the block, and must navigate the playing field as you hurtle downwards at terrifying speeds.

Driving Beat-'em-Up
Two cars 'scrap' to the death in a small arena. Viewed from the side like traditional beat-'em-ups. Cars can perform special moves, such as blinding the other player with their headlights on full beam before handbrake-turning into its bodywork.

DMRPG (Dance Mat RPG)
Embark on an epic quest across a mythical land as the dancing wizard Magicus Feeticus. Use the power of salsa, rumba, tap, ballroom, jazz and many more to defeat your enemies, the tuneless demon Bumnotes.

Horror Racing
Like a normal racing game, but with tracks laden with jarring psychological, Silent Hill-style horror. For example, you could powerslide around a corner only to be confronted by an image of a mutated child, where you'd scream and hurtle off the track, earning a disqualification.

SingStar Violence
Viewed from the first-person, you creep through a series of dilapidated environments – crack dens, alleyways, etc – and have to hit the right note on famous pop songs to bludgeon a tramp or pop shapeless blob's heads with 9mm pistols.

Driving Stealth
Try to sneak through a warehouse as a big, roaring car. The place is swarming with ultra-perceptive guards. Wait until they sneeze or cough to skid past. The hardest game ever, not the mention the most delightfully pointless.

Let me know what you think.

Cheers,
The Development Team
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